Racial Narratives, Group Identity and African-American Political Behavior

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Abstract

My dissertation seeks to advance the racial politics and political behavior literatures in American politics by focusing on the role of "racial narratives" in explaining historical changes in African-American political behavior over time. I accomplish this by generating a narrative approach to political behavior, drawing from political theorizing on collective identity formation and social constructivism in facilitating political action. Using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, my narrative approach to political behavior helps to explain patterns in African-American political behavior throughout American history. Four "racial narratives" are articulated and defended: a "white supremacist" narrative, an "egalitarian-transformative" narrative, a "nationalist-solidarist" narrative and finally an "anti-transformative" narrative. Each of these narratives are developed in particular periods of American history by white and African-American elites, and they do affect African-American political behavior in predictable ways given the arguments, ideas and concepts that comprise each narrative. The dissertation concludes by engaging with a narrative model of political behavior and proposing future research using this model, particularly in regards to the "intersectionality" of various social identities (class, gender, and sexual-orientation), and the degree to which an emphasis on "racial narratives" can contribute to theoretical and empirical understandings in the fields of American racial politics and American Political Development.

Table of Contents

Introduction	**1**
Chapter 1: On the Definition of "Racial Narrative"	**16**
Chapter 2: Why Racial Narratives?	**52**
Chapter 3: Establishing the White Supremacist Narrative: 1619-1865	**81**
Chapter 4: The Rise of the Egalitarian-Transformative Narrative: 1865-1965	**140**
Chapter 5: Nationalism, Solidarity and Backlash: Establishing the Nationalist-Solidarist and Anti-Transformative Racial Narratives	**204**
Chapter 6: Black Nationalism, Racial Identity and African-American Political Participation	**290**
Conclusion	**323**
References	**342**

Introduction

Racial politics is a constitutive feature of the American polity. More specifically, the discrimination, prejudice and racism that African-Americans have experienced (and continue to experience) affect their life chances and goals as a group. The continuing plight of African-Americans as a group is especially problematic given the social, political and economic values that purportedly inform the functioning of American society and its institutions. These values, including political equality, individual liberty, tolerance and free and open market exchanges, have rung hollow for African-Americans since the inception of America.

How are we to understand this deep and abiding tension in American politics? Moreover, what are the consequences to African-Americans, especially in terms of their engagement with the American political system? The current study seeks to address these questions by inquiring into the (possible) foundations of political behavior. The question of how, and in what ways behavior (in a variety of senses) is informed by the historical as well as social milieu of actors is the theoretical beginning point for this analysis. From the act of voting, to acquiring the requisite political information needed to make an (informed) judgment concerning candidates, issues or other political choices, scholars have persistently (and persuasively) argued that the social and historical environment of agents matter a great deal for understanding and explaining their behavior.

The current study extends this line of argument, by seeking to understand how the political behavior of African-Americans throughout American history has been informed

by a variety of "racial narratives"[1] that have been articulated both by political elites as well as African-American social movements. The emphasis on "racial narratives" provides the current study with a set of concepts, arguments and ideas that enable scholars to more fruitfully inquire into the socio-historical contexts in which African-Americans have acted politically, and how American social, political and economic institutions have affected African-American political behavior.

To be further discussed in chapter 1, the current study suggests that political behavior generally, and for African-Americans in particular, is grounded in social relationships forged through the development and articulation of "stories" that implicate and elucidate social, political and economic ideas and arguments which are then tied to, and help to generate, values and social practices. These values and practices are the building blocks so to speak of American social, political and economic life and institutions. In short, political behavior is a social and political phenomenon, and in order to fully comprehend why agents act the way that they do, scholars need to understand the complex array of "stories" that help to inform, and constitute social and political life.

Consequently, the current study seeks to articulate a constructionist[2] account of political behavior. It articulates an account of human agency embedded in social and political structures and institutions, but does not reduce human agency to simply acting in ways that conform to structural and institutional imperatives. Indeed, the current study is informed by recent social theory in the social sciences that suggests the mutual

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[1] When terms are enclosed in quotes, this is meant to convey that 1) they are contested terms, or 2) to indicate that such terms are socially-constructed.

[2] By "constructionist" the current study means that society, its values and the political institutions and practices which reflect these values are created or generated by actors through their interpersonal and structural interactions. Human social and political life is generated; it is not pre-socially or politically "given". For a scholarly articulation of constructionism matching this definition, see Searle 1995, Gibson and Somers 1994; Somers 1994.

constitution of agent and structure: human agents exist within structures that limit and constrain what behaviors and activities they can pursue, but agents themselves can critique current structural arrangements both from within and outside of currently existing structures.

In addition, the current study seeks to emphasize the contingency of social, political and economic structures, suggesting that they can indeed be transformed and reformed by "active agents" engaged with their social, political and economic environments. Actors are not passive in this argument, but rather have the ability to act in ways that have consequences for current and future structural and institutional configurations. Therefore, the current study will explore the role of agents in the construction of alternative "racial narratives" and the institutional and behavioral effects of these alternative constructions. As will be developed in the subsequent chapters, the development of current social, political and economic institutions (and the ideas which underlie them), are a result of social and political interactions. Thus, American institutions (and the norms and practices they engender) are not essential, unchanging or "fixed", but rather constructed, fluid and changeable.

Why the Current Study is Important

Scholarship in American politics regarding political behavior in general and African-American political behavior in particular suffer from theoretical (and empirical) short-comings that the current study seeks to address. The explicitly constructionist emphasis articulated here pushes the study of political behavior to inquire into the mutual constitution of agency and structure which can help to articulate a set of theoretical

propositions scholars in political behavior ought to take notice of, and hopefully incorporate into their own scholarship.

The first theoretical short-coming addressed by the current study is the lack of a well-defined argument concerning how racism, discrimination and prejudice was created, and justified given the political values that supposedly inform American society and its institutions. More specifically, while scholars have recognized that patterns of subordination have existed in American society since its inception, very little theoretical emphasis has been placed on explaining how racism, discrimination and prejudice has changed over time (as well as its justifications) (for an exception, see Smith 1997). The study of social, political and economic processes that underlie racial norms and practices would benefit from a close analysis of the "stories" used by actors to justify their actions and the functioning of political institutions.

Empirically, given the dearth of theoretical work inquiring into patterns of norm and value change in regards to African-Americans and their place within the American political system (and the mechanisms that create this change), much of the empirical work of scholars engaged in the racial politics sub-field tends to be focused upon what form racism takes, and how best to measure it (Sears et. al. 1997; Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Kinder and Sears 1981; Meertens and Pettigrew 1997; Huddy and Feldman 2009). While these ideas and arguments are important for establishing the presence of racism in American public opinion (more specifically, white public opinion), very little empirical work traces out how changing patterns of racism have been created over time. Indeed, as one scholar notes, work still needs to be done on how patterns and beliefs in racist

attitudes have changed from "old-fashioned" Jim Crow racism to more modern and "subtle" forms of racism (Sears et. al. 1997: 49).[3]

While the current study does not engage with the empirical literature of the late 1990s directly in that it does not "test" alternative theories or claims regarding measures of racism, it does engage with this empirical literature by using many of the theories that underlie this literature, and then asking the more difficult question of how to understand shifting racial norms and practices. Indeed, empirically, the current study seeks to build on the insights of previous scholarly work, and then add to it by elaborating, both theoretically and empirically, how racial norms inform American society and its institutions, and how they shift over time.

Finally, this study is also unique in that it focuses on African-Americans specifically, as opposed to cataloguing differences between whites and African-Americans (for work done in this regard, see Dawson 1994; 2001; Tate 1991;1993). The explicit focus on African-American political behavior is important, for the current study seeks to see how racial norms, ideas and structures both imposed upon African-Americans and alternative racial norms and practices generated by African-American social movements have affected (and continue to affect) the political behavior of African-Americans. The dual focus, both upon racism from mainstream American society and the alternative conceptions of social, political and economic life generated by African-Americans themselves, shows that any account of behavior more generally must recognize both the agency of those actors who act, and the structural, institutional and

[3] One question gone unanswered thus far is whether African-American's exhibit racist attitudes towards white-Americans. While there is research along these lines dealing with how African-Americans perceive how Whites feel about African-Americans (Sigelman and Tuch 1997), further research is required to ascertain whether African-Americans exhibit racist attitudes and policy preferences.

socio-historical context in which those actors act. The current study suggests that in order to fulfill this complex and difficult task, a focus on "racial narratives" is required and needed.

Data and Methodology

The current study seeks to analyze several forms of data. The first form is the scholarly literature dealing with "race" in social and political theorizing, accompanied by work done in a variety of other social science disciplines including social psychology, philosophy, sociology and anthropology. While this type of "data" is a non-traditional sort, it is essential for coming to a deep understanding of how other scholars understand the role of "race" in American society. As such, the current study is heavily indebted to the work of other scholars, but also generates a unique way in which to ascertain, explain and understand African-American political behavior. While the scholarly work upon which the current argument is built contains data of the traditional sort (both survey as well as interview data), the current study seeks to integrate insights from this work to generate a greater theoretical understanding of the role of "race" in American politics.[4]

The second form of data is first-hand accounts of both political and social elites as they grappled with issues of "race". Some of the elites will include: Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Fredrick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey, The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, Stokley Carmichael, Martin Luther King, Jr., Bobby Seale, and many more. The insights drawn from these accounts will be crucial for comprehending the "racial narratives" which inform the attitudes and

[4] To clarify: the use of scholarly work on "race" as "data" is not meant to suggest that scholarship does the "work" of ***explaining*** how "racial narratives" impact behavior historically. Rather, scholarship helps to set the historical "stage" of racial politics in American history. The value of scholarly work as "data" is that it helps to *describe* how historical conditions allowed for certain "racial narratives" to form and be transformed (or rejected).

arguments of more "mainstream" political elites as well as those elites who helped to generate alternative "racial narratives" through the creation of social movements. Beyond helping to understand the "racial narratives" which influenced American society throughout history, these accounts also provide a measure of authenticity to the current argument; by drawing upon these authors' ideas and arguments, the current study is more readily able to "contextualize" and, by extension, historicize the "racial narratives" of this analysis. Finally, by reading the first-hand accounts of social and political elites, the study is able to understand the organizations that have facilitated African-American political behavior, and the various forms this behavior has taken over time.

The final source of data comes from the National Black Politics Study (NBPS) of 1993 conducted by Michael C. Dawson and his colleagues as well as the National Black Election Study (NBES) of 1996 conducted by Katherine Tate (Dawson et. al. 1993; Tate 1998). The NBPS and the NBES are nationally representative samples of all African-Americans within the United States. These surveys are used for several reasons. First, the population surveyed is made up entirely of African-Americans, which is extremely important for the current study's focus on African-American political behavior. These studies also have a number of questions pertaining to the political behavior of African-Americans, including traditional activities such as voting and contacting elected officials, to more "unconventional" forms of participation such as engaging in protests and marching. Consequently, a wide variety of behaviors can be assessed through the use of this data. Finally, the NBPS and the NBES have many survey questions which tap into the main independent variable for this study, "racial narratives". These include questions dealing with how the U.S. federal government ought to help African-Americans, to

whether or not African-Americans ought to form their own political party. All told, these surveys contain a wealth of information that will be extremely useful in testing through regression analysis the effects of "racial narratives" on African-American political behavior.

Given the wide array of data used for the current study, the methodologies employed are multiple and varied. The first method for the current study revolves around reading both scholarly and first-hand accounts of American racial politics. This method is best characterized by a deep and thorough reading of the various texts that are employed in the analysis.

Qualitative Methodology

To maintain a rigorous analysis of the texts analyzed, the texts themselves are not taken at face value, e.g. simply expressing the point of view of the writer. Instead, the text is always placed in the historical context in which it is written. Therefore, much background knowledge is required to make the reading of these various texts "meaningful", e.g. rendering a coherent conception of what the author(s) are speaking about. The methodological rigor comes from seeking a tight relationship between the historical context of the writing, and the argument(s) pursued by the relevant author. The texts, therefore, are not "self-interpreting"; they need to be understood and analyzed from within the processes and institutions that constitute the writer's temporal and spatial position.

Because of the necessity to historicize (but not reduce to historical circumstances) the writings of the authors employed in the current study, certain features of the writings

are emphasized to generate a way of reading texts to render their comparison and contrast coherent. The questions that inform the reading of the texts include:

1. What assumptions do authors make, both philosophically as well as empirically?
2. How do the various assumptions authors employ allow them to make certain claims (and to exclude others)?
3. What claims are made by authors, and what evidence do they use to buttress the claims they make?
4. What patterns or regularities exist in each text?
5. If patterns can be discerned, how do they "fit" with, contradict or inform the patterns found in other texts?
6. How is the author's context informing their writing? Do they seek to transform their context through their writing?

These six questions help to standardize the readings of the various texts used for the current study, which also enables a process of replication by other scholars.[5] The rubric of questions created above thus constitutes a methodological set of criteria by which to judge and understand the writings of authors. The criteria meet the standard of rigor primarily by proposing to read texts with a similar set of analytical tools that do not vary across the readings of texts, thus enabling standardization, and by extension, comparison and contrast.

[5] While more traditional forms of analysis such as the use of quantitative methods allows for easier replication, the same "norm" of replication so important for social scientific inquiry is still important for the current study. While the reading of texts is, to varying degrees, a "subjective" process, being forthright in how texts are read enables other scholars to at least understand the patterns or regularities observed in the current study, and to scrutinize them through engagement with the same texts.

Quantitative Methodology

The second method used in this analysis is the traditional quantitative methods used in social science. The benefit of these methods is that data, collected independent of the current study, can be used to ascertain the validity and veracity of the theoretical argument developed throughout the study. By enabling the current study to operationalize key independent and dependent variables, a measure of "objectivity" is added to the historical and "subjective" textual analysis. This is not to suggest that "objectivity" is the metric by which to judge whether a study is correct or generates some measurement of "true social reality"; the current study, both on ontological and epistemological grounds, denies any such pursuit. Rather, the quantitative analysis adds another layer of complexity to the historical analysis, and helps to provide a "check" against faulty historical or theoretical reasoning.

To put the argument in a different way, there is a benefit to using multiple methodologies to answer theoretically significant questions. While there continues to be a debate in the social sciences between the value, importance and necessity of quantitative and qualitative methodologies (with their attendant ontological and epistemological differences), the current study seeks to utilize both because of the perceived tension between them. If both forms of methodology purportedly seek to answer different questions, using both provides a strong grounding for the current study, and adds validity to its findings.

Philosophical Assumptions

Given the discussion above about the necessity to inquire into the philosophical assumptions of the texts that are analyzed for the current study, it is also important to

understand and comprehend the assumptions that inform how the current study goes about interpreting texts, and the conclusions drawn from that analysis. The current study makes several assumptions, best understood as both ontological and epistemological assumptions.

Ontological Assumptions

The current study, based upon the work of other scholars, sees reality as constructed or made by actors involved in interaction with one another (Searle 1995). While the current study does not deny the presence (and therefore the existence of) material reality, that reality itself is not taken as given, nor are the interpretations that surround what physical reality "means". The structures that inform how reality "works", such as social, economic and political institutions are par excellence an example of what is labeled here as a "social ontology": human social relations (in combination with material structures) constitute what exists. Humans create (and recreate) reality dependent upon the relations they forge with others. While material reality impinges upon human activity, it is not determinative of such activity as humans retain the ability to create that which exists.

Due to the emphasis on a "social ontology", the current study seeks to show that humans, if they are to act in the world, need a sense of who they are or what it means to be a particular sort of person. Thus, questions of identity are implicated in, and produced by the social construction of reality. What it means to be a particular sort of person, or member of a social category, depends upon 1) the set of assumptions, norms, expectations and values imputed to that category and 2) the practices by which these norms and expectations are not only produced but, by extension, solidified or rendered

fluid and changeable. The construction of that which "is" (and who we are) is not determined by structures or institutions. Structures and institutions are themselves constructions dependent upon norms and expectations agents generate, produce and use in their interactions with other socially-situated agents.

Epistemology

Flowing from the assumption of a social ontology, the current study rejects a foundationalist epistemology which posits that knowledge, if it is to be of value, must be "objective", universal, and context-independent. Given that agents are socially-constituted, the desire for "objectivity"[6] (and thus universal knowledge claims) is not only theoretically problematic, but also empirically unworkable in the sense that no scholar is able to extricate themselves from the object to which their studies apply. Scholars in the social sciences themselves are implicated in the interactions (both institutional as well as personal) that they seek to explain; there is no independent source of knowing that is not dependent upon (in one way or another) socio-historical context.

The current study posits that to come to knowledge of social, political and economic relations, scholars must recognize the intersubjective and context-dependent nature of knowledge claims. To say that knowing is intersubjective is to argue that what constitutes "truth" is dependent upon human agreement and the understandings human agents bring to questions of what it means to know something about social, political and economic life. Knowledge is not decipherable without some reference point in human social relations and conditions; it is context-dependent. This is why the current study seeks to utilize texts to come to an understanding of how human activity is patterned and

[6] When the term "objectivity" is used, it means a form of knowledge that is dependent upon some subject (usually the scholar) being separated from that which they study ("object") to render a "true" description that is not dependent upon the subject's biases or historical context.

conditioned by the social, political and economic contexts in which agents not only act, but see their activity as meaningful.

Of course, the epistemological stance defended here does seem to conflict with the epistemological assumptions of quantitative analysis. The assumptions implicit within this type of method are the epistemological claims of objectivity, universality and context-independence.[7] So, the question becomes whether the current study has an epistemological schizophrenia implicit in it by using methods which are seemingly built on incompatible epistemological assumptions. While a tension does exist, the current study does not see this as detrimental, but rather as a mechanism for providing alternative reference points in the analysis. Studies can depend upon certain philosophical assumptions which conflict with the methods employed as a means to internally check or validate not only the implicit philosophical assumptions built into the study, but also to answer theoretically and empirically interesting questions that can be addressed through multiple methodologies.

In sum, the philosophical assumptions of the current study suggest that human agency and structures are co-constitutive, and can be rendered intelligible through multiple methodologies that, at least on their face, might be philosophically incompatible. The tensions found within the current study only strengthen it by subjecting the theoretical argument(s) to a variety of tests, both qualitative as well as quantitative. Tensions, both philosophically as well as methodologically, can be productive and help to

[7] This statement might be too strong primarily because even quantitative researchers seem to implicitly recognize the contextual factors that influence outcomes. A good example is the use of demographic controls in individual-level political behavior research. Despite this, the data used (and the methodology employed to analyze the data) seems to "abstract" away from concrete, individual agents.

answer interesting questions that might go unnoticed if scholars are beholden to any particular methodology or set of philosophical assumptions.

Plan of the Analysis

The current study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is the major theoretical argument that specifies what a narrative is, and then continues to define what a "racial narrative" is. The theoretical argument will not only specify the key concept of the study, but it will also inquire into how "racial narratives" are formed, how they are used, and their relationship to human activity. In particular, the chapter will seek to show that an emphasis on "racial narratives" helps to understand the varied "meanings" of "race" in the American context. Finally, it will specify the *types* of "racial narratives" that are found in American history.

The second chapter seeks to show how an emphasis on "racial narrative" can inform the study of political behavior, and the racial politics sub-field within American politics. The important discussions in this chapter include why an emphasis on "racial narrative" helps to move the racial politics sub-field forward both theoretically and empirically, how this emphasis is different than the prevailing models of behavior generally in the larger sub-field of political behavior, and why a narrative account helps to better explain African-American political behavior.

The third chapter is the beginning of the historical analysis. This chapter ranges from 1619 until 1865. While this chapter will review historical occurrences in race relations during this period, the focus will be on specifying the "racial narratives" present during this time, their dominance, as well as their political importance both to the emerging U.S. state, but also for African-American political behavior.

The fourth chapter, much like the third, engages in a historical analysis from 1865 through 1965. Again, the emphasis will be on the "racial narratives" employed, the agents involved in their creation, and how they affected American social, political and economic life. Of particular importance here will be the "racial narratives" created by African-American social movements.

The fifth chapter continues the historical analysis by looking at racial relations from 1965 to the present day. Of particular importance here will be the black power and Black Nationalist movements of the 1970s, and the conservative reaction against these movements. The analysis will end with the 2008 election of President Barack H. Obama, and speculate on what his election as the first African-American president means for American racial relations.

The sixth chapter is a quantitative analysis of the NBPS of 1993 and the NBES of 1996 where measures of "Black Nationalism" will be employed to explain a variety of forms of African-American political behavior. Traditional regression analysis will be used to ascertain empirically whether or not African-American political behavior (in a variety of forms) is affected by a commitment to the tenets of "Black Nationalism" and an individual's strength of racial group identity.

Finally, the study is summarized in a conclusion that emphasizes the main theoretical and empirical findings, and how an emphasis on "racial narratives" can be used to inform future research in the study of political behavior, American racial politics and American political development.

Chapter 1: On the Definition of "Racial Narrative"

The current study begins with the argument that "racial narratives" have existed throughout U.S. history, and that they inform the political behavior of African-Americans. Yet, the concept itself has not been defined, nor has the theoretical argument for how such "racial narratives" inform African-American political behavior. The purpose of the following chapter is to lay out the argument for a narrative model of political behavior (and human activity more broadly). First, the chapter will define what a narrative is, the types of narratives that scholars have discussed, and the basic features of a narrative. Following this discussion, the argument proceeds to show how narratives can be both a source of structural order, but also a means for human agents to create their social and political life. Finally, the chapter ends with a specification of what a "racial narrative" is and several types of "racial narratives" that potentially inform American society and its institutions. The next chapter will discuss how "racial narratives" inform the political behavior of African-Americans.

What is a Narrative?

The basic definition of a narrative varies (Kellner 1989; Kohler Riessman 1993; Patterson and Monroe 1998; Gibson and Somers 1994; Somers 1994; Polanyi 1985), yet, all of the definitions of what constitutes a narrative focus on the interrelationship between plots, time, space, character and events, or to put it more simply, a "story".[8] As two scholars put it:

[8] This is a difficult term to use in the social sciences since it suggests a focus on fiction, which is a literary, not social-scientific form of analysis and argument. For a description of how narrative became important for social science in general, see Patterson and Monroe 1998: 317-319.

> "Narrative…refers to the ways in which we construct disparate facts in our own worlds and weave them together cognitively in order to make sense of our reality" (Patterson and Monroe 1998: 315).

Narratives are understood as human constructions that help to make sense of our existence as human beings (see for example, Sarbin 1986; Heilke 1996). The reason why narrative is so important is that it gives human beings a sense of self, or a sense of being in both time and space that allows humans to see order and patterns in human activity. Narratives help to situate humans in sequential orderings of events, and provide meaning to those orderings (Lemon 2001: 108). Narratives provide a sense of intelligibility to human activity by enabling actors to see that their activities and actions have a functional relationship to each other: once actors do something (x) then the actors do something else (y). In this scenario, (x) is not assumed to have caused or determined the resulting action (y). Rather, (y) is an intelligible response to (x); or, "this happened then that". Narrative therefore supplies the logic or underlying forms of order that give human beings the ability to act and see their action as having some relation to their prior actions. Without narrative, human action would be unintelligible, and therefore meaningless.

If narrative allows for human activity to have meaning and purpose, what then constitutes narrative? What elements or parts allow narrative to serve as a mechanism for human action to be rendered intelligible and therefore meaningful? Here, four elements will be discussed: time, space, plot and relational setting.

Time

Narratives are temporal constructions: they link together events into episodes that usually have some relationship to lived human experience (for an exception, see

Patterson and Monroe 1998: 316). Human life is temporal in the sense that it is definable by the doing or action of human agents in the world (Heidegger 1962). Insofar as this is the case, and humans experience the movement of time, humans are in need of some mechanism that allows the motion of time to be sequential and consequential. An emphasis on narrative helps to promote such a focus primarily because of the perception that narratives have a tripartite construction: a beginning, middle, and then an end. In ordinary usage, the idea implied by this formulation is a linear procession of time from one point to another. While a focus on narrative does not necessarily depend upon such a linear conception of time, it is important to note the temporal aspect of narrative: it helps to structure reality in a way that provides order to the passage of time (Kerby 1991:15-16).[9] In this sense, narratives are always temporal constructions, even if they seem to imply atemporal or transcendent human ends or action.

Space

Not only are narratives temporal constructions, they are also spatially constituted in that they help refer agents to a specific place or location in time. So, to take a mundane example, we might generate a narrative of how we came to be sitting in our living room watching television. The fact that we are in a particular location requires us to account for how we got there in the first place; we do not just "magically" appear in a specific location or spatial arrangement. Therefore, narratives help to locate agents in spatial arrangements, and provide legitimacy for such spatial arrangements. An example of the spatial element constituting narrative is the highly abstract "story" of the "American Dream" which posits that all Americans (regardless of their gender, class or

[9] Humans perceive time to have a beginning, middle, and end. The "beginnings" and "endings" of narratives are arbitrary in the sense that humans impose such reference points on the passage of time.

race) have the ability to be socially and economically mobile through hard work (Hochschild 1995). Despite the structural limitations imposed upon individual choices given one's place in social, political and economic hierarchies, individuals believe that spatial arrangements can be changed and modified based upon their individual choices. An individual's place in American social, political and economic hierarchies is seen as dependent upon one's choices, not inequalities in American society. In sum, narratives are not just simply temporal constructions; they are also spatial in that they locate us within the social, economic and political relationships we have and possibly want to have.

Plot

Plot is a difficult concept to define, but the plot of a narrative is how its temporal and spatial configurations cohere into meaningful episodes (Somers 1994: 616). The essential notion is that for human action to have meaning, it must be placed into temporal and spatial relationships with other events. One way of understanding the role that plots play in narrative is by suggesting humans are "emplotted" in the narratives that constitute human life:

> "The connectivity of parts is precisely why narrativity turns "events" into *episodes*, whether the sequence of episodes is presented or experienced in anything resembling chronological order. This is done through "emplotment." It is emplotment that gives significance to independent instances, not their chronological or categorical order" (Somers 1994: 616).

The idea of emplotment implies that to understand narrative (and human action), one has to give an explanation of why a narrative has the ordering of events that it does.

Interestingly, the idea that the process of emplotment constitutes narratives suggests that one can articulate hypotheses about how events occur, and the degree to which the occurrence of particular events corresponds to the hypothesized plot (Somers 1994: 616). Therefore, to understand the role of plot in narrative is to be able to explain how narratives function in rendering meaning to human activity. What this further implies is that plots are characterized by certain themes that selectively appropriate certain events, social relationships and material practices which help to provide meaning and evaluative criteria for the process of emplotment (Somers 1994: 617). The plots that underlie narratives are created via emplotment or the interconnection of events that are then selectively chosen given certain ways of normatively understanding how events fit together into networks or relations of meaning.

Relational Setting

Human beings exist in relationships with other people in a variety of contexts. To the degree that these relationships are constitutive of human experience, an emphasis on narrative requires an explication of how human relationships help to shape, form, generate and promulgate particular narratives (Somers 1994: 626). Social practices, norms and institutions that are informed by the narratives generated through human interaction then structure these relationships. It is extremely difficult to separate human agents from the social practices, norms and institutions that are derived from their interaction with one another. Yet, the focus on relational setting allows for an emphasis on social and political change primarily because as human relationships undergo flux, so to do social practices, norms and institutions. Thus, while the emphasis thus far has been on the extent to which narratives provide order, coherence and stability to human activity,

they can also be a source of change due to how humans relate with one another via interactions over time and across spatial arrangements and boundaries.

Narratives have several features that make them an important concept for understanding human activity. The four elements mentioned above – time, space, plot and relational setting – all suggest that human activity is a constructed process facilitated by the ways humans generate meaning through their repeated interactions over time. The four elements described above are the conceptual foundations of narratives, but it is also important to recognize that lived human experience is often not explicated by agents in these terms. Instead, agents tend to make arguments, create ideas and develop concepts to represent the four elements described here. Yet, what has not been discussed are the types of narratives that can potentially affect human activity, how certain narratives can be dominant and subordinate, and the way in which narratives operate both as structures constraining human action, but also enabling human agency.

Types of Narratives

Ontological Narratives

An ontological narrative is used "to define who we *are*; this in turn can be a precondition for knowing what to *do*" (Somers 1994:618)(emphasis original). The essential idea is that we need to know what defines us as a person. Such conceptions of "personhood" implicate questions of self-identity. To know who we are requires a sense of self, and this in turn places us within social structures that endow us with not only a sense of who we are, but also, who we are not. Thus, ontological narratives are partially configured by reference to external "others", or people and groups which are seemingly definable by alternative characteristics, patterns of living and behavior.

What this further implies is that a conception of self-identity is, "social and interpersonal" (Somers 1994: 618; Gibson and Somers 1994). In essence, ontological narratives, if they are to provide a sense of self, are made in relationship to other individuals, collectivities and the social structures in which those individuals and collectivities exist. How it is that we define the self and what it means to "be" a particular person is irreducibly social. Human existence and a conception of how that existence is ordered are dependent upon social relations, and the institutions and structures which support such relations. This, of course, suggests that ontological narratives and the conception of self they generate are also political in that they have an impact on how societal goods (such as political power, wealth, income, status) are distributed. To the degree that conceptions of self, both individual as well as collective, have a strong impact on which groups or persons match the normative criteria established for what it means to *be* a particular person (and therefore a member of a political community), there are profound implications for focusing on the ontology of self-definition and (re)definition over time, and across space.

Yet, the question becomes how certain ontological narratives become publicly valued and promoted. How is it that conceptions of selfhood, especially at the collective level, affect the social, economic and political practices of human life? One such way to understand the impact and importance of ontological narratives is to argue that in society there is what has been termed "public" narratives.

Public Narratives

Public narratives are, "those narratives attached to cultural and institutional formations larger than the single individual, to intersubjective networks or institutions"

(Somers 1994: 619). They are narratives which help to solidify membership and allegiance to social structures such as the family or church, and political entities such as the nation-state. They help to provide justification for the functioning of such institutions, and the practices which underlie them, by allowing for a sense of continuity and order to be inferred from their existence as entities which create patterns to human interaction. Such narratives therefore are built upon sets of political values and ideals which are interwoven and help to mutually reinforce one another. Such claims in American society to the "American Creed" (Mrydal 1944), or the "overlapping consensus" (Rawls 2005) are examples of such public narratives: they provide the legitimate foundation that is needed for the stable functioning of social, political and economic systems over time. This is not meant to suggest that dilemmas or contradictions are not found within "public narratives"; indeed they are (Smith 1997). The basic point is to suggest that social order requires a set of arguments, precepts and value orientations that help to provide a reason for persons to be morally committed to sets of institutions, norms and practices.

Public narratives, in addition to providing the justification for societal relationships and the moral dimensions to those relationships, also help to organize and mobilize those committed to such narratives. In a sense, public narratives serve as the catalyst for political action in that they use myth and symbols (such as national songs, flags, and heroic political figures) to provide a reason for public forms of activity (Edelman 1964: 53-65). People need to feel as if their action matters or has purpose, and public narratives provide this sense of purpose by integrating complex ideas, simplifying ambiguities in human interaction, and promoting a sense of agency.

Finally, public narratives also serve as cognitive reference points for human meaning. Insofar as human capacities for information acquisition are limited, and the processing of that information requires certain cognitive structures to assimilate information into pre-existing categories or schemas, public narratives are cognitive road maps that provide discernable categories that enable human beings to make sense of complex societal phenomena including war, inequality, poverty, and intergroup relations. Building upon work in political science that emphasizes heuristics as mechanisms for individuals who lack the capacity to be "fully" rational decision-makers,[10] public narratives serve a cognitive function as mechanisms for simplifying complex information environments (Kuklinski and Quirk 2002; Popkin 1991; Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock 1991).

Given the functions and importance of public narratives, what about the grand narratives that inform human society over time? While ontological narratives define the self (both individually and collectively), and public narratives help to solidify moral commitments to institutions, through myths or symbols, and provide cognitive schemas for simplifying the complexity of social and political life, are there narratives which transcend both of these?

Metanarratives

Metanarratives are those conceptions of human existence that seem to transcend historical context such as the famous mind/body, reason/irrationality, individual/society

[10] While it is difficult to define what it means to be "fully" rational, some characteristics include: access to full information, the ability to process that information without cognitive "shortcuts" and to make decisions based upon the weighing of all possible benefits and costs to certain actions.

dualisms that have existed in Western metaphysics and philosophy (Somers 1994: 619).[11] Yet, metanarratives are overarching conceptual schemas that seem to incorporate both ontological and public narratives. For example, the idea of "Progress" as an overarching idea incorporates conceptions of the self such as rationally-informed action, and the notion that institutions, political and otherwise, will continually get more representative, more inclusive and enable greater amounts of freedom which reflects a normative conception of how society and its institutions function over time. Therefore, metanarratives can be seen as the "background"[12] conceptual schemes upon which conceptions of the self are created, and public or cultural practices are situated. Because metanarratives exist, to varying degrees, in the "background" they are also less likely to be contested politically than ontological or public narratives. This is so because the functioning of agents - their purposes, intentions and motivations - are conditioned by these metanarratives. The argument advanced for the implicit nature of metanarratives is not meant to convey the idea that they cannot be directly confronted and interrogated (for examples, see Shapiro 1997; Swidorski 1997; Rosenthal and Schram 1997). Rather, metanarratives constitute what is considered "common sense" and therefore are (or at least can be) internalized by actors whose actions reproduce and validate these metanarratives.

Besides the idea that metanarratives are overarching and therefore are the "background" assumptions of human life, metanarratives also function to prescribe and

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[11] The suggestion is that while these dualisms or dichotomies are purported to transcend history, time and space, they are in fact historically, as well as temporally and spatially contingent. They are based upon certain assumptions about human beings, the communities in which they live, and how human social relations are created over time.

[12] The term "background" is used to connote the way metanarratives usually operate unconsciously upon agents' conceptions of self, and their understanding of how institutions and social practices reinforce those conceptions.

promote (as well as restrict) the possible ontological and public narratives present in any given society. The notions of prescription and promotion are important here; it is not simply that metanarratives help to create "common sense". Instead, they also provide the moral and normative justifications for what is considered possible for agents to do, and therefore, by extension, what they can not do. A good example is social science itself: what constitutes "good" and thus "proper" social scientific inquiry is conditioned by the extent to which certain sources of knowledge are used to buttress theoretical claims. Some knowledge sources are minimized whereas others are valorized. In the same way, in dealing with questions of intergroup racial relations, the metanarrative of "civilization" vs. "barbarism" suggests that only those groups of individuals who meet certain normative criteria of being "civilized" will have (and ought to have) access to such resources as political power, the control over information, prestige and many other social goods. Those who are considered "barbaric" can be excluded, marginalized or denigrated.

All three types of narratives (ontological, public and meta) are interrelated and mutually constitute one another, providing a conceptual vocabulary that promotes focusing upon the way in which human existence is itself narrated and dependent upon how actors find meaning, purpose, stability, order and consistency to their everyday lived experience. The problem (implied by the discussion above about metanarratives) is that narratives are not neutral in the sense that they are simply representations of an external reality that actors find themselves in. Narratives can be (and, indeed are) constructed along lines of domination and subordination. Narratives allow for the expression of

power by some groups or actors over others. The question then becomes how some narratives become dominant whereas others do not.

Dominant and Subordinate Narratives

Dominant Narratives

To suggest that certain narratives become dominant implies that some narratives have the ability to control, manipulate and regulate how society is understood, and the ways in which institutions function, and therefore constrain agent thinking and behavior. In political science, one way of thinking about dominance is to suggest that certain narratives have, or at least are imbued with power.

Power as a concept is notoriously difficult to define. It seems to involve not only the ability to use material structures and resources to limit and constrain behavior, but it also involves ideational constructions that make it difficult to even imagine alternative social and political relations (Lukes 2005: 14-60; 108-152). As scholars of narratives note, the degree to which narratives can "naturalize" certain social and political relations allows them to specify and direct conceptions of self that do not challenge the status-quo (Kellner 1989). Moreover, to the degree that certain narratives can integrate material resources with ideational constructs of meaning, they can also produce and therefore systematically develop identities that are marginalized and repressed (Foucault 1980). The essential idea is that the degree to which a narrative can (or will) be dominant depends upon the ability of agents to harness material resources and ideational

constructions that give legitimacy to certain social, political and economic patterns, practices and institutional outcomes.[13]

Another way to think about the ability of narratives to become dominant is to suggest that agents can use narratives by mobilizing bias or the notion that politics is about the degree to which, "some issues are organized into politics while others are organized out" (Schattschneider 1960: 69). In the same way, certain conceptions of agency and self-identity can be constrained and repressed by defining what constitutes a "proper" conception of self and what is considered the appropriate alternatives by which agents can challenge conceptions of what it means to "be" a particular sort of person or group member (Schattschneider 1960: 66). Insofar as certain narratives can "mobilize bias", they can also help to restrict patterns of social and political conflict. Certain narratives have the capacity to restrict the "scope of the conflict" through their basis in particular material and ideational resources (Schattschneider 1960: 1-20). One way to think about the degree of restriction imposed upon the "scope of the conflict" is whether the scope is privatized (restricted), or socialized (expanded). Narratives, if they are dominant, tend to have the ability to privatize conflict, therefore restricting the scope of conflict which effectively reduces the number actors involved. Dominant narratives are dominant precisely because they have the ability to define alternatives, to stigmatize or repress the pursuit of ideas and arguments which challenge the status-quo, and have the ability to demobilize agents committed to alternative conceptions of who is a viable political agent.

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[13] It is important to note that *agents* create narratives, but that narratives can create or limit *agency*. Therefore, when a narrative is "dominant" the term is used in a dual sense: powerful agents create narratives, and such narratives enable or prohibit agency.

Subordinate Narratives

Subordinate narratives are those which lack the material and ideational resources to "mobilize bias" and control the definition of political alternatives. They are subordinate insofar as they lack access to political power, prestige and other important social goods that would enable them to challenge dominant narratives. Subordinate narratives are usually castigated as the "Other"; they are the social and political category by which the dominant narrative legitimizes its control. So, for example, American society has a strong commitment to free-market capitalism, which is underwritten by such values as self-reliance, individualism and freedom. It is the dominant economic narrative. However, its dominance is dependent upon contrasting it with the subordinate economic narratives of governmental regulation of the marketplace, "socialism", and the like, which purportedly seeks to create dependence on government, restricts individualism by promoting collectivism and ultimately is based upon constricting human freedom. The essential point is that the dominant narrative is underwritten by appeals to cherished political values that are contrasted with alternatives which seemingly violate those values. It is this process of "othering" which allows dominant narratives to subordinate alternative narratives precisely because they are described and denigrated as destructive, dangerous or "utopian".

Critical Appraisal of Dominant and Subordinate Narratives

The previous discussion indicates that dominant narratives are able to repress subordinate narratives (and the agents who seek to promulgate them) because of their material and ideational advantages. What could be inferred from this discussion is that subordinate narratives cannot challenge the dominant narrative, and therefore, human

agency is either severely restricted or completely denied. The problem is that dominant narratives are not – despite their being presented as such – smooth coherent wholes that lack inconsistencies, contradictions and logically incompatible values. It is precisely the presence of these contradictions or inconsistencies that can allow for subordinate narratives to challenge dominant narratives (Delehanty and Steele 2009).

Agents who seek to challenge dominant narratives can do so by showing how logical and moral consistencies are found in dominant narratives. Those agents who are seeking to challenge dominant narratives can show how their subordinated narrative promises to fulfill certain cherished values and ideas *precisely because* the dominant narrative denies (or makes logically problematic) the values and ideas it seeks to valorize. This indicates that the dominance of certain narratives is precarious insofar as the logical inconsistencies are pointed out by those agents seeking to challenge it. Once this is done, the dominance of certain narratives has to be re-asserted, usually in ways that are seemingly incompatible with its logical premises. By pointing out inconsistencies, a "fissure" is opened up whereby the subordinated narrative can allow for human agency in articulating alternative practices and institutions.

Of course, the question then becomes whether subordinated narratives can transform whole social, political and economic systems. Or, to put it another way, can subordinated narratives actually re-configure understandings of human action and meaning? The answer to this question is both yes and no. On the one hand, if subordinated narratives are successful at challenging the dominant narrative, they have the potential to be broadly transformative; to shake the very foundations of institutions and reconfigure long dominant social practices. On the other hand, those agents whose

interests are served by the dominant narrative are not likely to allow such broad-scale transformations, and will seek ways to re-establish the power of the dominant narrative.

There is dynamic relationship between the dominant narrative and subordinated narratives. The degree to which the relationship between the two changes depends upon historical circumstances, the agents involved in (possible) social and political transformation, and the material and ideational resources agents can use to pursue their political projects. As will be shown, human activity over time is not static, and the degree of agency afforded to human beings to alter their social and political realities will depend upon a multitude of factors, and their intersection over time.

Yet, we are still left with a difficult theoretical problem: if dominant and subordinate narratives exist, to what degree do these narratives structure human activity, denying a robust sense of agency? While narratives are structural in the sense that they help to provide order and coherence to human activity, they are still nevertheless human constructions: they depend upon agents willfully engaged in producing social and political reality. What we need to finally specify is the mutual constitution of structure and agency through the concept of narrative.

Structure and Agency: the Role of Narrative

To begin our discussion of structure and agency, it is important to specify what these terms mean. Unfortunately, especially in the case of structure, definitions are hard to come by (Sewell 1992). However, for the current discussion, structures can be defined as cognitive schemas which are then tied to, but not reducible to material and ideational resources (Sewell 1992: 11-12). Structures are cognitive in the sense that they condition human activity and provide order and stability. Yet, in order for structures to do the

theoretical work of conditioning human activity, they need to be linked to resources, or, "anything that can serve as a source of power in social interactions" (Sewell 1992: 9). Thus, resources can be of a non-human type (inanimate objects, machines, factories) and human type (such as knowledge, strength, and ingenuity) (Sewell 1992: 9). Structures exist "virtually" in the sense that they are cognitive maps humans have in their heads which allow for the importance or power of certain human and non-human resources.

Agency is a bit more unwieldy, but the basic idea of agency is that human beings can act in the physical world, and have an affect on the outcomes in that world. This does not mean that the world itself is a "given" into which humans are artificially inserted. Indeed, how the world is understood is powerfully influenced by the intersubjective understandings and constructions of what the world "is". Nevertheless, the central idea is that humans can exert control and impact on the world, resulting in patterns of activity that are produced over time and space. In addition, human agency requires the idea that humans have the ability to know what they are doing. Otherwise, they might as well be simplistic, biological automatons who mechanically engage in action. Humans have the ability to understand why they do certain things and not others; they retain the ability to not engage in certain activities and therefore they do not act "blindly" or merely due to external forces impinging on their behavior (Giddens 1984).

So, how then can we say that narrative is a structure, but also enables agency? Narratives exist (as specified above) as (in part) cognitive schemas that are constituted by societal norms, political values and the practices which reproduce these norms and values over time. But, as alluded to above, narratives are dominant or subordinate depending upon the types of resources that they enable humans to use to pursue their political

projects. Therefore, narratives are structural and provide agency in that narratives create order, stability and coherence to human life, but, in order for them to do so, humans must create them through the resources they have available (both human and non-human). As humans create narratives to make sense of their activity, they use resources which then allow for the creation of alternative structures or cognitive schemas. Therefore, structure and agency are mutually constitutive through narrative: structures (understood as cognitive schemas) enable humans to act and make sense of their world through the use of resources, but the human usage of resources enables the generation of (possibly) alternative cognitive schemas. Structures condition human activity, but human activity also produces (and reproduces) structural constraints. Thus, despite the implicit idea that structures are constraints, these very constraints enable human agency.

Of course, this discussion does not mean to suggest that structures (and the resources humans use to generate them) are neutral. As before when speaking of dominant and subordinate narratives, certain structural constraints can be repressive, controlling, and dominating. And, as described above, the dominance of structures is precarious as "fissures" also seem to arise in the ideas and concepts which underlie structures that are linked to resources used to sustain those same ideas and concepts over time. Thus, any conception of structure and agency must account for how power differentials affect the degree to which certain forms of structures and human agency are possible (Sewell 1992).

With the description of narrative complete, it is now time to specify what is meant by a "racial" narrative. While this would seem to be a simple process of just adding on another descriptive term to the account above, some major work is left to be done,

especially in specifying the types of "racial" narratives that are suggested to have existed throughout American history. The discussion below will try to specify a conceptual definition of a "racial" narrative, link it to the three types of narratives described above, and how they are implicated in questions of dominance, subordination as well as the mutual constitution of structures and agency.

What is a "Racial" Narrative?

Conceptually, a "racial" narrative is a sequential ordering of events into episodes that is informed by racial norms and social practices which provide a sense of meaning and order to lived human experience. The term "racial" is meant to suggest that episodes are overlain with descriptions about how one ought to think of racial groups.[14] Thus, as we are focusing upon African-Americans, it is useful to try and describe what these "racial" norms and practices promote both in American society about African-Americans, and the degree to which African-Americans have also contested some of these "racial" norms and practices.

<u>African-Americans as "inferior"</u>

The proposed "inferiority" of African-Americans derives from many sources, most notably the enslavement of African-Americans in the early era of the American republic. On the one hand, enslavement indicated that African-Americans lacked human agency: the very fact of enslavement (despite the use of force to create and sustain this practice) indicated that African-Americans were inferior in the sense that they could not maintain independence from colonizing powers. And, to the extent this was the case, it further reinforced the idea that African-Americans were somehow "less than human":

[14] It is important to note that such descriptions would vary depending upon the racial group one is describing and investigating. A "racial" narrative is meant to be a broad concept into which various descriptions could be inserted.

they were rapacious, pursued their desires as opposed to their reason, they lacked intelligence and, above all, were unable to be members of the American polity (Smith 1997).[15]

Because of the early intergroup relations between Euro-Americans and African-Americans was based upon repression and subordination of African-Americans to Euro-Americans, certain ideological and prejudical attitudes were developed and reinforced to allow for the subjugation of African-Americans. For example, Thomas Jefferson, the purportedly heroic figure and writer of the Declaration of Independence goes to great lengths to denigrate African-Americans:

> "[African-Americans] are more ardent after the female; but love seems to them to be more of an eager desire, than a tender delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation…In general, their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection…in reason [they] are much inferior to whites…and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous" (Jefferson 2004: 239).

For Jefferson, these traits were due to their biological make-up. While Jefferson indicated that the environment in which African-Americans existed had something to do with their current state of "development", it is also important to note that he blames African-Americans for their lack of enlightened reason, imagination and self-control (Jefferson 2004: 239). The point here is that even in early America where the political values that underwrote the American Revolution (self-evident ideas of human freedom and equality), African-Americans were seen by colonists as inferior beings both by nature, but also by social custom and cultural values.

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[15] See Chapter 3 for a description of how these social perceptions of African-Americans became dominant.

Consequently, and as will be further elaborated in subsequent chapters, African-Americans were seen as "inferior" biologically, culturally and morally allowing for their repression by those who espoused the enlightenment liberal values of liberty, as well as some conception of equality grounded in universal human rationality. This conception of African-Americans as "inferior" has all the traits of a narrative: it is generated by human agents to make sense of, and designate a conception of self, e.g. mainly the predominance and valorization of the "White". Moreover, it retains the traits of narrative including temporality, spatiality, relational setting and emplotment. And, finally, it also inscribes power relations (or interactions based upon dominance and subordination) into the narrative.

African-Americans as Violating American Values

In more modern times, especially since the late 1970s, an alternative "racial" narrative has developed. No longer wedded to depictions of African-Americans as inherently (read: biologically) inferior to Whites, new arguments were generated depicting African-Americans as suffering from a corrupt cultural lifestyle characterized by laziness, a sense of entitlement for past wrongs, a lack of solid nuclear family structure and criminality (for descriptions of this line of argument, and its important political implications, see Edsall and Edsall 1991). What this "racial" narrative suggested was that government attempts in the 1960s to aid African-Americans was having perverse consequences not only in helping to develop a sense of dependency upon government, but also in undermining traditional American values including limited government, self-reliance, individualism, and perhaps most important of all, free and open competition for

employment and access to other goods distributed through a relatively free market economy.

In this second "racial" narrative we see more explicitly the type of public narrative that helps to provide legitimacy to the functioning of institutions and to generate a moral sensibility in regards to institutions, social practices and serves as a heuristic for complex arguments based on intersecting values and beliefs. It also suggests that structures (such as governments) deny agency both to African-Americans as well as white-Americans. Finally, this "racial" narrative also seeks to decontextualize the activities and practices of agents. For example, to suggest that African-Americans are ultimately to blame for their social, political and economic plight implies that what has occurred in the past has no, or little, impact on what is occurring presently. Moreover, to decontextualize is to further reject the idea that current structural configurations and the distribution of resources that flow from these configurations are (in part) the result of willful acts of agents seeking to protect their individual and collective interests. What is so interesting about this "racial" narrative is that it is supposedly not concerned with "race" whatsoever; traditional American values are neutral in the sense that they prescribe what all ought to do with no distinctions made in terms of "race", or other group memberships.

African-Americans and Racial Justice

A final example of a "racial" narrative is one that stresses the need for racial equality both in terms of legal institutions and the ability to be viable political agents (which indirectly suggests that some conception of social equality might be needed). The best exemplar of this type of "racial" narrative is the Civil Rights movement of the late

1950s through the late 1960s. Under the direction of individuals like Martin Luther King, Jr., there was a concerted effort to transform American social, political and economic institutions by highlighting the contradictions in American commitments to liberty and equality in reference to the treatment of African-Americans. Through such tactics as non-violent protest and civil disobedience, transformations of American society did occur, without the wholesale destruction of the American social fabric. As will be elaborated in chapter 4, the Civil Rights movement was (and continues to be) an example of a social movement underwritten by a "racial" narrative that emphasized the need for African-Americans to be treated as full members of American society; to have access to valued goods such as education, employment and housing as well as participate politically without fear of white retribution for such activities. While white-Americans were involved in the Civil Rights movement, it will be argued that this social movement also represents a genuine "racial" narrative created by African-Americans in their search for imagining (and creating) a more racially egalitarian society. In that sense, this "racial" narrative, while subordinate relative to a "racial" narrative of African-American inferiority and exclusion, was able to take advantage of contradictions in the dominant "racial" narrative to provide a greater sense of human agency to African-Americans. The Civil Rights movement shows how "racial" narratives are examples of how structures and agency are mutually constituted.

As we can see from the three examples above, "racial" narratives are sequences of episodes in which "racial" norms and practices are interwoven into the other elements of narrative such as temporality, spatiality and relational setting. Moreover, "racial" narratives operate at all three levels of narrative. They are ontological in the sense that

they confer intelligibility upon persons and collectivities; they provide a sense of self-identity and the substance of that identity. "Racial" narratives are also public narratives in that they promote a sense of moral responsibility to structures and institutions, mobilize actors to pursue certain projects and serve as cognitive heuristics for analyzing and understanding complex information environments. Finally, "racial" narratives also operate within the metanarratives that constitute human society such as "civilized" vs. "barbaric", and "rational" vs. "irrational". Yet, one question does still arise: could it be said that "race" itself, as a social and political category, operates as a metanarrative, at least in the American context?

On the one hand, American society has been deeply affected by what some scholars have termed "the race problem": e.g. the moral inconsistencies and contradictions that arise from a society in which values such as individualism, equality, liberty and self-government co-exist with such values as racism, prejudice and injustice (Mrydal 1944). To the degree that American society is infused with this deep, internal contradiction "race" can be thought of as a metanarrative in the sense that it operates as a "background" upon which the everyday politics of American society occurs. Therefore, there is no escaping the harsh realities that come from a society that from its beginnings was based upon racial prejudice and discrimination. This, of course, is not to suggest a lack of agency, as even metanarratives, despite their having an unconscious affect on politics, can be transformed or changed. It is only meant to imply that "race" is not going away, nor is it an isolated social and political category that can be neatly relegated to its own set of social, economic and political problems. It is both structural as well as systemic (Bonilla-Silva 1996; Feagin 2001).

On the other hand, there have been wide-scale transformations in American society regarding questions of "race". There is wide scholarly consensus that Americans no longer believe in biologically-driven theories about African-American inequality (Kinder and Sanders 1996), and African-Americans enjoy an unprecedented level of wealth, access to jobs and employment from just 50 years ago. This perspective would suggest that American society is somehow becoming "post-racial": that "race" is no longer an extremely important factor in determining how elites operate, what policy issues they debate, or how everyday Americans think politically. Consequently, this perspective would likely deny that "race" itself is a metanarrative in the sense developed here in American society; it is only one of many competing narratives that render American life and its institutions meaningful.

As we proceed with the argument, it will be come increasingly apparent that while "race" influences much of what occurs in American politics, the focus will be on the ways in which "race" functions at both the ontological and public levels of narrative. Thus the current argument indicates that "race" has been, over time, welded to larger metanarratives of American (and indeed Western) society. Therefore, while the current argument is agnostic about the degree to which "race" functions as a metanarrative, it is still an extremely important element in American social, political and economic interactions over time.

With a discussion of what is meant by "racial" narratives theoretically articulated, it is now time to specify the types of "racial" narratives that have potentially existed in American society over time. The discussion here will specify four such "racial" narratives and tentatively try to identify how these "racial" narratives can be mapped onto

American historical experience. In no way is this discussion meant to suggest that these "racial" narratives are the only ones that could be theoretically elaborated or defended. Nor is the discussion meant to suggest that these "racial" narratives are monolithic.[16] Moreover, the discussion presupposes how narratives can be contested, challenged and transformed, hopefully showing how changes in "racial" narratives can, and indeed do take place over time. With these admonitions in mind, we now turn to the types of "racial" narratives that are to inform the subsequent empirical chapters.

Types of Racial Narratives

The four types of "racial" narratives include: a white-supremacist narrative, an egalitarian transformative narrative, a nationalist-solidarist narrative, and finally an anti-transformative narrative. These "racial" narratives are seen as mapping onto periods of American history, although the degree to which these narratives map onto specific periods without any overlap is likely unattainable.[17] In all four narratives, the goal is show their internal logic, especially in how they help to articulate a conception of what it means to "be" a particular person or member of collectivity, and the public articulation of that conception of self-identity.

White Supremacist Narrative

A white supremacist narrative is one that assigns certain racial categories, such as "white" a preeminence whereas other racial categories, such as African-American "inferiority". The central idea is that a white supremacist narrative seeks to accord value

[16] Indeed, given the previous theoretical discussion about the degree to which narratives – especially dominate narratives – contain within them internal tensions and contradictions, it would be presumptuous to defend such an assertion. Rather, the goal is to specify some of their elements, and why these elements are important constitutive features of the "racial" narratives elaborated.

[17] By "unattainable" it is meant that history is necessarily "messy" and suggesting history can be neatly cordoned off into "eras" without ideas and values of previous "eras" overlapping with subsequent "eras" is naïve.

to one racial classification or category by institutionalizing exclusionary policies and values that "naturalize" and therefore render certain identities rigid and stable, denying those individuals and collectivities their equal regard and respect by various political institutions such as central governments and political sub-units.[18]

In the American context, a white supremacist narrative existed at the inception of America (Smith 1997; King and Smith 2005: 79). From the denial of African-Americans as citizens, and postponement of the slavery issue until the early 19th century, the constitutional foundations of the American republic was based upon an unequal system of rights, and therefore unequal access to political institutions and the actors who inhabited those institutions, e.g. elected representatives. More problematic than the legal exclusion of African-Americans as citizens (and therefore as members of a political community with the attendant rights and resources that flow from such a membership), was the systematic denial of African-Americans as human. They were seen as biologically inferior, and therefore could be treated as "property". The ideological foundations of this belief system helped to inscribe an exclusionary identity on African-Americans which (to a very large degree) structured their life chances and prospects as human agents (King and Smith 2005: 80).

Moreover, political coalitions were centered upon extending and deepening this white supremacist narrative (King and Smith 2005; Omi and Winant 1994) through the development of public policies that linked together essentialist and "fixed" categorizations of African-Americans and the social, economic and political deprivation of Africa-Americans. Consequently, coalitions of actors (both governmental and non-

[18] When the term "naturalized" is used, it is meant to convey that identities become less contestable and more impervious to agents' political actions in transforming such identities.

governmental) systematically sought to erect barriers to the formal political inclusion of African-Americans and denied them social status as viable members of the political communities in which they lived.

Thus, for a narrative to be white supremacist, it must have certain basic features:

1. It creates essentializing identity categories whereby one racial group, "white", is dominant whereas other racial groups, such as African-Americans are seen as not only subordinate, but also *inferior*.
2. The essentialized identity categories are linked to broader social practices of exclusion accompanied by a "racial ideology" which gives legitimacy to such exclusionary social practices.
3. Finally, politically powerful coalitions of actors seek to pursue such a narrative by institutionalizing policies and mechanisms to assure the continued dominance of "whites".[19]

Overall, a white supremacist racial narrative is one that seeks to increase and institutionalize the power of "whites" and the purported values that serve "white" interests as a racially powerful group. This dominance is accomplished through the establishment of certain practices (such as discrimination and segregation) which have the twin effects of denying human agency and value and locating African-Americans into conditions which help to reinforce their subordinated position in society. The current study's hypothesis is that a white supremacist narrative existed from the early1700s until 1865, and then again from around the 1880s until the modern civil rights era of the 1950s.

[19] To clarify: other "racial" narratives described below might meet criterion (3). The major difference of course is the *goal* of the narrative: to maintain white dominance and hegemony in society.

Egalitarian-Transformative Narrative

Essentially the opposite narrative, the egalitarian-transformative narrative argues against the dominance of one racial group or identity over another. Instead, the essentializing identities solidified by the white supremacist narrative ought to be dismantled, and replaced with more fluid conceptions of self-identity, with the public or cultural recognition of the value that ought to be accorded to racial collectivities as human beings. Thus, an egalitarian-transformative narrative requires institutional recognition of the equal worth and value of racially subordinated groups (King and Smith 2005: 80-81). Due to the incipient recognition of equal worth, social practices and values which affirm unequal worth and dignity of racial groups such as African-Americans are seen as antiquated, destructive and ultimately lack legitimacy.

The articulation of such a narrative can come from the dominant racial group and the elites who support transforming what it means to be a member of a particular political community that holds certain values such as equality, liberty and justice as in the American context. For example, as will be discussed in chapters 3 and 4, some whites (mainly abolitionists) saw officially-sanctioned enslavement and the subsequent Jim Crow system as repulsive and destructive of American moral order (although, many came to these conclusions not from a commitment to political values, but religious values). Yet, the current study does not seek to explain the creation of the egalitarian-transformative narrative by simply suggesting that because whites supported such changes, they could come into effect. African-Americans themselves formed political organizations as mechanisms to challenge the dominance of the white supremacist

narrative that sought to institutionalize and ultimately rob African-Americans of their capacities to act as political, social and economic agents.

The defining characteristics of the egalitarian-transformative narrative include:

1. A challenging of dominant racial intergroup relations that are buttressed and given force through essentialized racial identities.
2. By doing (1), generates a set of prescriptive and normative concepts, such as equal worth, dignity and fairness that disrupt the power of the dominant racial intergroup relationship.
3. Is developed by those who are subordinated through organizational development that fosters mobilization and the generation of resources to counter-act the dominant racial group's power over political institutions, social practices and "common sense" norms that constitute social relations.

Therefore, an egalitarian-transformative narrative is one that challenges the dominant racial group's power by highlighting contradictions in the narratives used by the dominant racial group to buttress and legitimize their power. In order to challenge such dominant groups, subordinate groups articulate normative and moral concepts which try to disrupt the dominant group's narrative. But, beyond just normatively challenging the conceptual foundation of the dominant racial group's narrative, such groups need organizational development for mobilization and access to resources in order to make their challenge sustainable over the long term.[20] The current study hypothesizes that an egalitarian-transformative narrative began after the Civil War, lasted until the late 1800s,

[20] See chapter 2 for an explanation for how alternative narratives arise, and see chapter 4 for a historical analysis of the egalitarian-transformative narrative.

and really began to flourish post World War II and into the 1950s and 1960s, culminating in the passage of the various Civil Rights Acts of the mid-1960s.

Nationalist-Solidarist Narrative

While utilizing some of the insights of the egalitarian-transformative narrative, the nationalist-solidarist narrative is one that emphasizes the uniqueness of African-American cultural traditions, and establishment of African-American social institutions which are separate from the mainstream racial group's institutional and social practices. Good examples of the agents who pursued such a narrative include the black power movements of the late 1960s and 1970s through such groups as the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California, and activists such as Malcolm X. More modern approaches, such as the Nation of Islam, also stress the need for a revitalized African-American cultural tradition, but from very different premises than those of the movements which originated, in part, as a reaction against the perceived weaknesses of the Civil Rights movements of the late 1950s in advocating only "reforms" to a political system that needed wholesale transformation (King and Smith 2005: 84).

The reason for the label of "nationalist-solidarist" for this narrative is that conceptions of self-identity are intimately associated with a sense that African-Americans do indeed form their own "nation" with sets of cultural, political and social practices that require institutional forms which conflict with prevailing political, social and economic institutions of America. What is needed is a commitment on the part of African-Americans to pursue solidarity with one another in the generation of these unique forms of social and cultural patterns. Thus, a sense of nationalism is coupled with a desire for solidarity, or shared expectations and norms of what it means to "be" African-American,

generating a variety of political commitments ranging from the rejection of mainstream American life, to the organization and mobilization of African-Americans for unique political projects while remaining engaged with the institutional features that characterize America as a society committed to some version (however weak or strong) of racial egalitarianism.

The basic features of a nationalist-solidarist narrative include:

1. A commitment to the exploration, development and institutionalization of African-American cultural beliefs and practices, however those beliefs and practices are defined.
2. A desire to acquire a sense of solidarity among all African-Americans based upon the beliefs and values pursued in (1).
3. The creation of organizations which help African-Americans to seek solidarity and commitment from one another and to be engaged in collective political projects that promote what is unique and valuable to African-American's as a group.[21]

Therefore, a nationalist-solidarist narrative stresses the uniqueness of African American cultural life, and seeks to find mechanisms (organizational as well as institutional) to pursue such unique cultural traits. This type of narrative further seeks to problematize current American institutions to varying degrees, and wants to cultivate a shared set of norms, expectations and values that can inform African-American experience in America. Finally, it also wants to establish political projects that have

[21] The current study treads lightly when it comes to imputing to African-Americans "group" interests and preferences which seem to homogenize what in fact is a diverse and heterogeneous racial group. The purpose here is not to suggest that *all* African-Americans believe in these ideas. Rather, the analytical necessity of differentiating the substantive foundations of alternative "racial" narratives requires some way of "demarcating" what constitutes particular "racial" narratives.

social implications for the generation of as vibrant solidarity among African-Americans as a group. The current study suggests that the nationalist-solidarist narrative was extremely important in the late 1960s and 1970s, and found some resurrenge in the 1990s.

Anti-Transformative Narrative

With the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, the demonstrations against the war in Vietnam, the development of free speech movements on college campuses, and the articulation of a "counter-culture" which embraced recreational drug use and sexual emancipation, there was a strong negative reaction against the perceived excesses of the "transformations" that occurred in the 1960s. Particularly in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s and 1980s, conservative politicians and political coalitions coalesced painting the "culture of permissiveness" which was generated by the 1960s as destructive to American values such as law, order, and respect for authority, self-reliance and limited government.

From Nixon to Reagan (and to varying degrees George H. W. Bush), an alternative "racial" narrative developed which stressed the over-expansion of governmental intrusion into citizen choices, particularly in reference to the Great Society social programs of Lyndon Johnson. Of particular interest here is the degree to which commitments to reduced entitlement spending, decreased regulation of free-market capitalism and the pursuit of national defense implicate "racial" practices and norms. Indeed, some suggest that a commitment to reduce governmental entitlement spending and the ending of preferential treatment for minorities in terms of employment and access to educational institutions promotes a "color-blind" society in that to consider "color"

(read: race) is to be racist and that the lack of such considerations in according desired social positions and goods is the only (if not the best) way to pursue a society where racial classifications do not matter for one's access to social goods. Thus, this conception is egalitarian (although it is a very weak form): all should have the ability to access desired social goods without respect to race. And, it is conservative insofar as it treats inequalities not as defects of institutions, or imposed by one's place in the hierarchies of modern society, but rather as a problem of individual initiative and self-control.

The issue that the current study wants to highlight is that despite conservative attempts to suggest that ignoring race will in effect eradicate racial discrimination and injustice, the problem is that one's race, particularly in the case of African-Americans, has a tremendous impact on the life goals one can pursue, the level of wealth and well-being one can have, and the degree to which mobility throughout the social hierarchy is possible. Yet, the reason why this narrative is so rhetorically powerful is that it seems to resonate with deeply held American political values, while at the same time denying the extent to which human agency is constrained by structures not of our own making.[22]

Therefore, the characteristics of an anti-transformative narrative include:

1. A veneration of order, stability and the pursuit of self-control, limited gratification and respect for authority, coupled with a deep skepticism of governmental activities to ameliorate racial injustice.

[22] It is important to also note that this conservative-egalitarian narrative is *not* the same analytically as a white supremacist narrative. While they both seem to be system-affirming (and therefore implicitly or explicitly buttressing the power of the dominant racial group), those committed to the conservative-egalitarian narrative need not believe in the biological inferiority of African-Americans as an explanation for inequality and lack of opportunity.

2. An emphasis on pursuing a "color-blind" society by ignoring the degree to which "racial" norms and practices are implicated in the functioning of society and its social, economic and political institutions.
3. A commitment to procedural equal opportunity in the pursuit of social goods without a concomitant acceptance that the procedures used for distributing social goods are affected by socio-structural and political inequalities which in turn affect the extent to which such distributions are "fair" or "just".

Conclusion

The framework presented in this chapter has tried to accomplish several tasks. First, it has tried to specify what is meant generally by narrative, its constituent parts, and the types of narratives scholars have theoretically elaborated. Secondly, it has tried to articulate a conception of narrative as involving power relations by suggesting the presence of dominant and subordinate narratives, and how dominant narratives become dominant, but also how subordinate narratives can challenge dominant narratives. In addition, the current argument has also proposed that a focus on narrative can help to show how structures and human agents are mutually constituted, a major fault line existing in previous social and political theorizing on how human relations are patterned but also constructed. Finally, and most importantly, drawing from the theoretical explication of narrative in general, a conception of "racial" narrative has been elaborated with examples of such narratives from American history and a rough typology of "racial" narratives existing throughout American history as been generated. While the conceptual ground work is now completed, the next task is to situate the "racial" narrative model in the American political behavior literature and to show the degree to which it can help

explain African-American political behavior over other competing models of political behavior. We now turn to this task.

Chapter 2: Why Racial Narratives?

The preceding chapter delineated an argument and conceptual language by which to understand what constitutes a narrative, in general, and a racial narrative in particular. Yet, the question this chapter seeks to answer is: why focus on racial narratives for the study of African-American political behavior? This question is of utmost importance primarily because there are large literatures dealing with racial politics and political behavior that have created theoretical and empirical models for understanding political behavior in general, and African-American political behavior in particular.[23] The purpose of this chapter is three-fold. First, since the major concept of the study, racial narrative, implicates questions of what constitutes "race" a definition of this term is provided both in general, but also in reference to the socially constructed concept of "race" that informs this study. Second, an argument for how racial narratives are generated will be elaborated, focusing on the causal role of elite discourse in generating racial narratives. This discussion will also deal with how certain racial narratives become dominant and change over time. In addition, the chapter discusses group identity, how racial narratives construct conceptions of a group self, and how these conceptions (possibly) mobilize African-Americans for a wide variety of political behaviors that will be elaborated in subsequent chapters. Finally, the narrative model described here will be situated within the racial politics and political behavior literatures. It will be argued that this model not only extends the racial politics literature, but also provides a unique conception of behavior not discussed by the prevailing models of political behavior.

[23] Despite the wide range of theoretical and empirical models for explaining African-American political behavior, the literature detailing these models, for the most part, has not engaged (nor developed) what I have termed here as a narrative model of behavior.

What is "Race"?

Defining what is meant by the term "race" is fraught with difficulties.[24] To begin, there seems to be no conceptual definition that is agreed upon by racial scholars. The very definition of what constitutes "race" is usually not defined explicitly. Rather, the concept itself takes on a specific meaning given the theoretical questions that scholars are trying to pursue. The term "race" changes over time, depending upon the social and political contexts of scholars who seek to use the term in their research. Therefore, there is no concrete definition that can be used regardless of the context(s) in which it is articulated. Some even suggest that "race" is not amenable to conceptual definition: there is no way in which to pin down its conceptual foundations for to suggest such foundations is to solidify and therefore reify what "race" is.[25] Despite the problems associated with defining "race", such an attempt is made in order to articulate the major concept of the current study. The definition of "race" is broken down into two parts. First, a general definition is given without reference to specific groups of persons that are categorized as belonging to a specific "race". Then, given this general definition, a conception of "race" is developed that emphasizes the constructed and therefore contingent nature of this social and political category.

Race: A General Definition

The term "race" has a long history in social and political thought. The conception of "race" that informs modern Western thinking originated in the 17th Century with the

[24] Providing definitions of such contested concepts as "race" implicates questions of power on the part of researchers to define the limits of what can be legitimately studied given conceptual definitions and the distinctions such definitions generate. Therefore, while the concept of "race" is given a definition here, it is not meant to imply that other conceptions or definitions lack legitimacy or can be created to facilitate studying complex social and political phenomena.

[25] I am indebted to Thomas W. Heilke for this argument.

major political works of such writers as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke (Hannaford 1996).[26] To put the argument in its most simple form, the concept of "race" was a means for writers and political thinkers to categorize groups of persons. This desire to categorize groups of persons developed out of the emerging conception of natural science that began in the 17th Century. This conception of natural science was focused on being able to categorize and therefore render intelligible the "natural" world according to observable traits and characteristics that could be used to generate discrete categories and therefore to generalize about the underlying structure and order of the physical world.

In the same way, by the late 18th Century, scholars were using the natural scientific method of categorization to group together sets of persons based upon certain observable traits or characteristics (Hannaford 1996: 199). The key idea was that people could be classified according to physical traits which were used as proxies for differentiating persons and political communities based upon those groups of persons inhabiting them (Hannaford 1996). "Race" was not a social or political category (despite its being used to differentiate political communities): "races" were understood as constituted by traits and characteristics that were inherent in the individuals or groups of persons studied. The degree to which such traits or characteristics were contingent on social and political processes was discounted.[27]

The early work on "race" was subsequently supplemented by the works of natural scientists in biology (Hannaford 1996: 240-246; Voegelin 1997: 38). The work of Charles Darwin was extremely important for the study of "race". While early theorists of

[26] For an alternative account, see Ward and Lott 2002: xi-xxiii.
[27] Some early "race" theorists did suggest that certain environmental factors affected the observable traits or characteristics that differentiated "races" such as climate, food and the like. Yet, early "race" theorists did not conceive of "race" as affected by social and political processes or defined by such processes derived from their social, political and economic environments. See Hannaford 1996: 230.

"race" had the idea that groups of persons could be differentiated based upon observable traits and characteristics, the foundations of those traits lacked a basis in inductive reasoning. Yet, with the work of Darwin, such a basis was found: biology. By the mid to late 19th Century, "race" theorists were elaborating biological theories that allowed for certain "racial" classifications. Scholars were interested in the study of physical traits as rooted in biological structures such as the size of the cranium and skin pigmentation to classify groups of persons into "races" (Hannaford 1996: 270).

Despite the use of biology as a means to classify persons as belonging to a particular "race", the real turning point came with the work of Herbert Spencer who applied Darwin's theory of natural selection to human social groups. The rise of Social Darwinism had an enormous impact on how groups of persons were classified into "races" and the degree to which certain social and political traits were imputed to these groups (Hannaford 1996: 278). What is important here is the degree to which "scientists" used biological arguments (such as skull size) to imply social and cultural traits that were used to "naturalize" the inferiority (and superiority) of certain "races". Inductive reasoning was used to create systems of oppression and domination that were deemed "natural" and beyond political debate. Certain "races" (such as African-Americans) were deemed "inferior" and, by extension, could be treated as such politically and socially (Hannaford 1996: 284).

These arguments equated biological traits (e.g. genotypes) with certain social and political traits that were immutable and unchanging. The problem was that biological arguments were seen as determining one's place in the social, political and economic hierarchies of society. These scholars neglected to see the degree to which environmental

forces were important in the social and political activities and communities of certain "races". As scholars have noted, the emphasis on biology neglected to see how certain "traits" were conditioned by the environments in which actors were situated (Voegelin 1997: 60, 1998: 58). Human beings were not just reducible to their physical, bodily traits rooted in a foundationalist conception of biology. Rather, one had to account for the social practices and cultural "milieu" in which humans interacted with one another (Voegelin 1997). Ignoring the external sources of human action (e.g. social and cultural environment) was dangerous primarily because arguments about "race" were simply reduced to biological determinism that left no recourse for political activity to have an affect on the practices and customs of certain "racial" groups and their treatment by the wider society.

Given the argument above, a general definition of "race" is characterized as the grouping of persons into discrete categories delimited by certain traits or characteristics that define those persons at a fundamental level. What is missing from such a general definition is the degree to which the biological traits of racial groupings, such as skin color, are given meaning by social and political interaction over time. To put the argument another way, what is missing from the general definition above is the socially constructed nature of racial groups. What is required, therefore, is an explicit emphasis on the degree to which social norms, practices and political institutions create certain classifications of people. By extension, questions of dominance and power are implicated in the definition of certain racial groups and the characteristics that flow from such groupings. "Race" is a social and political category that cannot be reduced to biological traits that can be used unproblematically to define certain groups of persons.

A definition of what "race" is depends upon the values imputed to such a category, and the resulting differences in power that flow from such a process of imputation. Therefore, a more specific definition of "race" that moves beyond the simplistic understanding of "race" as a biologically-derived grouping of persons based upon immutable and unchanging characteristics is needed.

Race: A More Specific Definition

For analytical purposes, "race" is defined as a social and political category that is constructed or created by actors through their interaction in society over time. If an accounting of "race" is to be given, one has to understand the processes that have generated conceptions of "race", the actors involved in these constructive processes, and the degree to which social, political, legal and economic institutions have attempted to generate and render "natural" certain conceptions of "race". "Race" is multifaceted, drawing from societal expectations and norms about certain "racial" categories. Conceptions "race" are not just imposed by institutions and powerful actors in society, but they are also generated and changed by those human agents who are defined as belonging to a particular "racial" category. Any accounting of "race" must comprehend the institutional and structural environments of human agents in which they find themselves, and how (despite the constraints imposed by institutions and other structures) agents can, and indeed do define for themselves what it means to be a particular "race".[28] The importance of this conception of "race" is that it implicates the racial narrative

[28] What has been provided is an argument concerning how the current study conceives of "race" as a concept. What has *not* been provided is how the "racial classification" most important for the current study, African-American, has been understood and constructed over time. This is the subject of chapters 3 through 5.

approach to African-American political behavior described in chapter 1. It does so for two reasons.

First, as mentioned previously, racial narratives are human constructions: they depend upon how agents interpret their social and political interaction over time. If "race" were understood as biologically determined, the import of the racial narrative concept would be lacking since conceptions of "race" could be attributed to biological traits that cannot be changed through human activity. An emphasis on biological determinism would undermine the conception of human agency upon which the racial narrative approach depends.

Secondly, the definition of "race" as constructed enables the articulation of possibly conflicting conceptions of what it means to be a member of a particular "racial" category. Scholars need the ability to see how American society has defined certain "racial" categories such as African-American, and the degree to which this conflicts with what African-Americans' perceive their membership in this "racial" category to be.[29] Another way to state the same argument is that without a conception of "race" as constructed, there is no way to get at the ontological foundations of human consciousness and group membership without resorting to imputing what it means to be African-American. Group membership, and the meanings associated with that membership, must not be "essentialized" or "naturalized". Group membership and a conception of group

[29] Thus far the argument has specified what "race" potentially means, but it has not indicated the "boundaries" of particular racial categories. While it is necessary to set boundaries on social categories to aid in categorization, such "boundaries" are fluid and changeable, depending upon the meanings associated with racial groupings over time. The fact that different categorical labels are used to delineate groups is less important than the socially-constructed meanings attributed to social groups and how conceptual boundaries are dependent upon such meanings.

identity based upon the meanings of belonging to a group need to be treated as emerging from human interaction over time.

With the more specific definition of "race" articulated, a question still arises: what are the causal mechanisms by which racial narratives are generated? How are they constructed, and what allows for some racial narratives to become dominant, subordinating other racial narratives? As implied by the idea of "race" as socially constructed, how do subordinated agents challenge and problematize dominant racial narratives? These questions imply a need for an explanatory model. Such an attempt will include discussions of elite discourse, the role of material and non-material resources, the degree to which counter-publics can challenge those racial narratives that become dominant, and how racial narratives help to promote conceptions of group identity, facilitating and mobilizing actors to engage in a variety of political behaviors.

A Racial Narrative-Model of African-American Political Behavior

Any model begins with certain assumptions, ideas and arguments which lay the conceptual groundwork for explaining social and political reality. The model developed here is no different. The model requires the use of several concepts including elite discourse, resources, and the role of social and political values that provide meaning to the racial narratives elite discourse generate. Other concepts such as subaltern counter-publics and public intellectuals will need to be elaborated to show how alternative racial narratives can be generated and challenge dominant racial narratives created by social, political and economic elites. Finally, the concept of social identity will be elaborated to show how racial narratives promote conceptions of in-group identification, therefore

facilitating and generating the mobilization of actors for certain forms of political behavior.

Elite Discourse

The notion that societies contain social, political and economic elites is not a new one, and has been recognized by many scholars (for an overview in political behavior, see Blondel and Müller-Rommel 2009; Mills 1950; Domhoff 1967). The essential idea is that there is a certain strata of individuals who (for a variety of reasons) have the ability to gain (and maintain) prominent positions of power and authority in society. Because of their ability to have power (both in terms of making political decisions and informing the thinking of those who make such decisions) they are able to exert influence over society by not only controlling and limiting access to official decision makers, but also by generating the discursive boundaries of what is politically and socially meaningful in society (Zaller 1992). For the current study, elites are able to use resources, both material and non-material, to generate racial narratives that influence the opinions and ideas of members of a political community.[30] What is the relationship between resources and the generation of racial narratives that are influential in directing public opinion?

Because the generation of racial narratives by elites is not a costless process, resources, defined here as "anything that can be used to sway the specific choices or the strategies of another individual" (Dahl 1961: 226), are needed. These resources are material: such as money, or the capacity to use organizational infrastructure, but also

[30] Another way to state the argument is that elites generate frames that indicate to the broader mass public what to think about particular political issues (Chong and Druckman 2007: 109). It is important to note that frames are treated as conceptually different from narratives in this study. While frames usually originate through elite discourse, the reasons why certain frames resonate with the wider mass public is because of their attachment to widely shared meanings about political life based upon norms and values that are linked together in intelligible ways. Such intelligibility is provided by narratives. Thus, frames are dependent upon narratives for their impact and force.

non-material: such as the legitimacy afforded to their activities by virtue of their privileged status in society, and the use of widely shared norms and values implicit in society to buttress their arguments in interacting with decision-makers. Elites construct racial narratives by bringing together both material and non-material resources to propagate a racial narrative that categorizes certain groups of persons by particular traits or characteristics. In so doing, they solidify the status of certain groups of persons in society and inscribe a group identity on members of a particular group that restricts their ability to act and challenge elite-driven discourse. Elites seek to generate a racial narrative that gives legitimacy to the position of groups in the social structure of society, and in turn, provides an argument for why certain groups of persons ought (or ought not) to have power and access to decision-making. The degree to which the racial narrative succeeds in solidifying the position of groups in society is dependent upon the material and non-material resources elites can muster to disseminate it and how this narrative matches deeply held norms and values implicit in society. The intersection of material and non-material resources allow for certain racial narratives to succeed in solidifying the positions of groups in society. Insofar as elites can make use of ideas or norms widely shared in society as the basis for their racial narrative this can aid them in garnering the material resources needed to establish their discursive construction(s).

Racial narratives are generated by elites who seek to reinforce their own position in society by propagating discourses that solidify the location of groups within a society's social structure.[31] Insofar as elites are able to accomplish this goal, they are able to

[31] One question left unresolved is the degree to which elites have similar interests and therefore, provide coherent racial narratives. While this study cannot resolve the issue of elite interests (and the degree to which they are similar or different), there are different strata of elites, implying sets of divergent interests and providing a conceptual basis for the rise of public intellectuals and subaltern counterpublics.

maintain their own status while undercutting the ability of other groups to challenge their privileged status and access to power. What allows for certain racial narratives to become dominant is the ability of elites to render "natural" their racial narrative through the use of material and non-material resources. In other words, the elite-driven racial narrative becomes the "common sense" view of the world, and it solidifies the place of certain groups within that world. Alternative racial narratives that seek to challenge the "common sense" view of intergroup relations of power need some way of altering the "common sense" view propagated by elites which leads to intergroup relations of dominance and subordination.

Public Intellectuals and Subaltern Counterpublics

For those individuals and groups that seek to contest the dominant racial narrative, there needs to be mechanisms that allow such contestation to occur. For the current study, three mechanisms are important: the development of public intellectuals who are linked to subordinated groups in society, the development of subaltern counterpublics which provide a context in which to generate an alternative racial narrative, and conception of group self or identity that can enable certain forms of political behavior and action to challenge the dominant racial narrative and the group identity it inscribes on group members.

For analytical purposes, public intellectuals are those individuals who arise "organically" from within marginalized groups that help to articulate the interests, expectations and values of a particular group (Gramsci 1972: 118). Public intellectuals come from the group itself; they are not usually individuals who exist independent of the group and therefore are tied to the group through their interaction in group social

networks and organizations. The importance of public intellectuals is that they can help to develop and propagate alternative conceptions of group norms, and by extension, be an initial force in generating alternative racial narratives that seek to challenge the dominant racial narrative developed by social, political and economic elites in society. While public intellectuals do are elites in the sense that they have certain abilities to articulate complex ideas and arguments in meaningful ways, they are not elites in the traditional sense as they come from those groups who lack access to institutional power.

The importance of the public intellectual for the generation of alternative racial narratives is two-fold. First, because they are tied to marginalized or subordinated groups, they are aware of the plight of group members, they lack of access to power and they have the potential ability to foment an alternative conception of group identity that highlights the viability and agency of marginalized group members. In short, they can help provide the basis for suggesting an alternative conception of group self that can be the mobilizing force for political activity. Secondly, public intellectuals are usually (but not necessarily) involved in the generation of organizational infrastructure and the acquisition of both material and non-material resources that marginalized groups can use to generate an alternative racial narratives. While marginalized groups do not completely lack the ability to generate and use resources (both material and non-material), public intellectuals can develop arguments and the normative underpinnings of those arguments that can be used to give legitimacy to group demands and interests that can enable marginalized groups to acquire resources from other members of society. Despite the value of public intellectuals for the articulation of alternative racial narratives, there still needs to be a context in which such articulations can be debated, argued and finally

affirmed by group members. An important structural mechanism for providing such a context is the concept of subaltern counterpublics.

For some scholars, the development of subaltern counterpublics is an institutional or structural mechanism for marginalized groups to develop alternative conceptions of group consciousness through rigorous debate (Fraser 1990; Dawson 2001). The essential idea of a subaltern counterpublic is to allow "members of subordinated social groups [to] invent and circulate counter-discourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and needs" (Fraser 1990: 67). The central idea, therefore, is that marginalized groups construct an alternative "public sphere" in which debate about what it means to be a member of the group is hashed out among group members. Subaltern counterpublics also enable the development of alternative racial narratives because in these counterpublics, members are not defined by the group identity imposed upon them by the dominant racial narrative in the wider society; a discursive space is opened up whereby group members can circulate information and construct alternative conceptions of group identity.

While these subaltern counterpublics are social and political arenas that enable group members to debate with one another, they are still nevertheless structurally attached to the wider "public sphere" of society. Debate within subaltern counterpublics co-exists (however uneasily) with wider forms of public discourse about what it means to "be" a member of a marginalized group. This structural connection indicates that alterative racial narratives debated and articulated within subaltern counterpublics can have an affect on dominant racial narratives in that the alternative sources of information and argumentation created within the subaltern counterpublic can be mechanisms for

challenging the dominant racial narratives that exist in the wider society. Insofar as debate within the subaltern counterpublic shows or highlights normative and moral contradictions in dominant racial narratives that pervade wider society, critical openings or schisms are created whereby the marginalized group can articulate their alternative racial narrative and to do so in ways that are given legitimacy by the wider social and political norms and values of society.

What mechanism allows for these critical openings or schisms to be used to enable certain forms of political behavior and activity that aid in the dissemination of the alternative racial narrative? The major mechanism is the role that social identity plays in mobilizing agents to pursue certain forms of political action.

Social Identity and Political Action

The relationship between social identity and political activity is premised on the idea that an individual's social identity, "refers to the social categories, attributes, or components of the self-concept that are shared with others and therefore define individuals as being similar to others" (Monroe et.al. 2000: 421). Group membership (and the values and emotions associated with that membership) provides a psychological foundation and impetus for engaging in political action (McClain et. al. 2002). The argument is that an individual's conception of self is tied to a group, and actions that can help to promote that group's collective interests help to reinforce the individual's psychological attachment to the group, creating a strong positive feedback loop. Because political activity is costly (Lichbach 1995; Olsen 1965), and mobilization for political activity can be difficult on a number of fronts (Chong 1991; McAdam 1982), having a sense of self tied to a group can decrease the costs of participating in political action

while increasing the benefits. Because a sense of group identification on the part of individuals is based upon social categories and attributes, the dominant racial narratives in society can impose conceptions of group identity, but they can also be challenged through the generation of alternative racial narratives that condition an individual's sense of group identification and therefore promote action to facilitate the generation of an alternative conception of group identity.

While a sense of one's social identity can be found in psychological theory, it is important to recognize that a sense of self is a social and political phenomenon, and therefore is tied to broader social, political and economic structures as well as the values, norms and practices that underlie such structures. The presence and generation of certain racial narratives also conditions an individual's social identity by potentially reinforcing it (creating strong in-group identification). Therefore, an individual's social identity, or sense of self, is contextually driven in addition to being the result of underlying psychological concepts such as cognition, schemata and social representations (Monroe et.al. 2000). The type of political activity that an individual will engage in is dependent upon the historical social, political and economic environments in which the group with which an individual identifies has developed. Thus, in dealing with African-American political behavior, it is important to recognize that certain types of political behavior (e.g. voting, engaging in protest, attending rallies, or contacting public officials) might be better explained by a social identity approach to mobilizing individuals for political action. An individual's social identity (and the group attachment upon which it is built), is not simply a mechanism to mobilize individuals for all types of political behavior. The nexus between one's social identity and the types of political behavior it mobilizes

individuals to engage in is dependent upon the historical development of group characteristics (such as intragroup norms or organizational forms) and the role of the group in broader social and political structures, created by the racial narratives that partially constitute these structural arrangements.

The mobilizing force of having a sense of social identity tied to group membership allows for the articulation of alternative racial narratives through generating a commitment to certain forms of political behavior. So, when critical openings or schisms are created, an individual's sense of social identity can push individuals to engage politically in activities that help to articulate alternative racial narratives. By extension, changes in the broader social, political and economic context can provide incentives to alter the types of political behavior pursued to achieve what individuals believe to be in their group's interests. There is a dynamic relationship between an individual's sense of social identity, the context(s) in which they are embedded, and political behaviors they are likely to engage in.

Applying the Model

How then should we apply the model described above to African-American political behavior? As will be shown and developed in chapters 3, 4 and 5, the empirical focus will be on several factors, which include:

1) Identifying the relevant elite, their discourse, and the material and non-material resources used by the elite to disseminate racial narratives.
2) The social, political and economic contexts in which elites and African-Americans find themselves.

3) Whether public intellectuals arise in a historical period to articulate African-American group interests.
4) The development of subaltern counterpublics that enable African-Americans to articulate alternative racial narratives.
5) Factors that influence an individual's sense of social identity grounded in group membership such as the treatment of African-Americans by social and political institutions, and the social location of African-Americans within a society's social hierarchy.
6) The "racial narratives" that are indicated to operate in each historical period.[32]

By accounting for 1 – 6 above as we engage in the historical analyses of chapters 3, 4, and 5, the empirical work of these chapters will allow us to see how the presence of dominant racial narratives are challenged by African-Americans who seek to articulate alternative racial narratives and to do so through certain forms of political activity. The model described above therefore provides a means to assess the historical development of racial narratives and how they affect African-American political behavior.

With a causal model of racial narratives elaborated, it is now time to situate this model within two scholarly literatures: the racial politics literature and the political behavior literature. The key question becomes what a causal model of racial narratives can contribute to these literatures. The central conclusion is that the model contributes to the racial politics literature by being able to synthesize a good deal of work done by scholars, but, more specifically can help to explain how African-American political

[32] Please note: while the study specifies that certain dominant and subordinate racial narratives exist in particular historical periods, this not meant to imply that only those racial narratives specified exist. Others likely exist, and if they do, they will be mentioned in the empirical analysis. The reason for specifying specific types of dominant and subordinate racial narratives in historical periods is to deal with the general tendencies of each historical period.

thought has changed over time. In terms of the general political behavior literature, the racial-narrative model of political behavior helps to focus scholarly work on questions of what it means to exist as a particular sort of person.

Racial Narratives and American Racial Politics

The racial politics sub-field within American political science[33] is wide-ranging, dealing with such issues as racial divides in public opinion, political attitudes as well as policy attitudes (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Schuman et.al. 1997; Sears et.al. 2000), African-American political participation (Tate 1991; 1993), racism and its varied forms (Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Kinder and Sears 1981; Sears 1988; Huddy and Feldman 2009), racial identity (Dawson 1994; Tate 1993), the role of race in American political development (King and Smith 2005), and racial issues in the development of the American political party system (Carmines and Stimpson 1989). Due to the wide variety of research topics, it would seem that the inclusion of another conceptual model would have little impact on, or importance to the field. This would be to take too simplistic of a view of the theoretical and empirical promise provided by the racial narrative model.

For example, the conceptual model can (or could) be used to explain shifts in white and black public opinion regarding governmental policies over time, especially since racial attitudes are context-dependent and have shifted over time in meaningful ways (roughly) corresponding to the types of racial narratives that have been identified for study here. The racial narrative concept is important for understanding the role that "race" has played in the development of the American national government and polity, as well as the coalitions of actors who were involved in their creation. Finally, the racial

[33] There is also work done in Sociology concerning racial politics. For examples see, Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Bonilla-Silva 1996; Omi and Winant 1994; Winant 1994.

narrative conceptual model can also help to explain the degree to which African-Americans participate politically in American elections, and how party system change occurs over time.[34]

What the racial narrative conceptual model provides is a framework where attitudes, behavior and structural arrangements can be understood as dependent upon the "stories" that give these concepts meaning. Or, alternatively, an emphasis on racial narratives provides a theoretical and empirical tool for understanding questions of human identity and what it means to be a particular sort of person who is embedded in particular social practices and institutions informed by norms and values that render African-American political action intelligible. When scholars in the racial politics field speak of African-American political thought and action, what is needed is a conceptual framework that links to human agency and structural constraints. While some racial scholars argue that this can be accomplished by emphasizing "black political ideologies" (Walton Jr. 1985; Dawson 2001), what is missing in their analyses is how these ideologies are rendered intelligible through the integration of norms, values and social practices in plots characterized by actors pursuing certain political, social and economic projects.[35] What an emphasis on ideology requires is the discursive contours and parameters within which an ideology becomes intelligible (see Lane 1962), and this is the value of emphasizing racial narratives; they help to provide the "stories" in which black ideologies can be a

[34] The racial narrative model cannot explain some aspects of American politics, particularly those issues, debates and arguments which do not implicate racialized assumptions or beliefs. Despite the fact that the current study argues "race" is a constitutive feature of American politics, the model must explain a limited number of political phenomena. Otherwise, the model explains everything and therefore explains nothing.

[35] Some might object that this critique is unfounded since, at least in the work of Dawson 2001, he sees ideologies as created by language games that are underwritten by common rules and interpretations (58). The problem is that while ideologies might be created by language games and common rules, there is little mention of how these concepts are linked, providing the basis for his ideological argument. It is argued that an emphasis on narrative could provide such a linkage mechanism.

(potential) catalyst for action. In the absence of a conception of narrative as constituting ideological frameworks, the functionality of ideological perspectives becomes questionable given that there is no mechanism that allows a set of "shared meanings" (Dawson 2001: 60) to render ideological argumentation intelligible.

While Dawson and others imply that narratives are interwoven into black ideologies (Dawson 2001: 64), their theoretical and empirical foci is not on the narrative foundations of these ideologies. Narration, or the process of situating the self and collective within broader public "stories", is seen as a prerequisite for, but not a necessary condition of ideological thinking based upon conceptions of self embedded into group identity. The promise of an emphasis on racial narrative is that conceptions of selfhood and what it means to be a particular person is best articulated by emphasizing the narrational qualities of ideological frameworks.

Therefore, the conceptual model of racial narrative not only has the capacity to be able to explain changes in racial policy preferences and attitudes in American politics over time, but it also can provide a theoretical argument for contestation over what it means to be a part of the African-American community. In other words, emphasizing racial narratives provides a needed link between ideas and behavior; between what conceptions of self mean and how that meaning is expressed through coherent frameworks (such as ideologies) that can facilitate action. The crucial point is that political ideologies are manifestations of humans engaging in the activity of narration. The argument is not that the concept of racial narrative ought to replace other concepts such as black political ideologies. To suggest that one concept ought to replace the other is to neglect to see how political life is narrated, and how ideologies are frameworks that

make such processes of narration politically meaningful. The two concepts are mutually reinforcing: an emphasis on racial narrative provides the shared reference points for meaningful ideological debate and contestation, and an emphasis on ideology shows how racial narratives are not monolithic but rather differentiated given alternative conceptions of what a certain racial narrative implies about human agency and selfhood. Racial narratives are the broader ideational frameworks that constitute the shared social reality that is the basis for meaningful political debate (partially) grounded in political ideologies.

An emphasis on racial narratives is an important addition to the racial politics literature insofar as it is applied to questions of racial norm change and how conceptions of racial group membership are understood. Does the conception of narrative-informed behavior add anything to the broader literature in American politics concerning political behavior? In order to answer this question, it is useful to see how a narrative framework of political behavior is similar to other models in the field, but also quite different.

A Narrative Framework of Political Behavior: What is Its Status in the Field?

Instead of engaging in a lengthy discussion of the many models of political behavior that exist in the literature, it would be more useful to see how, and in what ways the narrative framework of political behavior articulated here fits well with the prevailing models in political behavior, and how it is different from these same models.[36] The ultimate suggestion is that the narrative framework of political behavior provides scholars of political behavior with a way to discuss and ascertain the meaning of behavior, and

[36] When the term "prevailing" is used in reference to the models in political behavior, the emphasis is on four different models: the rational-actor model, the Columbia School model, the Michigan School model, and the information-processing model.

therefore how human political action is dependent upon what it means to be a particular sort of person.

Similarities with Major Models

The narrative framework of political behavior shares affinities with many of the prominent models in the field of political behavior. First, it shares with the information-processing model that human's have a limited capacity to process information, and therefore act politically without seeking out all possible information or assessing every possible alternative (Kuklinski and Quirk 2002; Popkin 1991; Sniderman et.al. 1991). The essential idea is that individuals use heuristics or mental shortcuts when trying to decide how to act politically. According to the narrative framework, human beings use the plot structure of narratives to make mental shortcuts in their decision-making about acting politically. To put the argument differently, because narratives have plots that provide order to political events, generating episodes, humans can rely on this structure to order political information in a way to make a choice on how to act. While there are many plots within politics, the accessibility of any particular plot is dependent upon an individual's conception of self, e.g. who they perceive themselves to be. If their conception of self is made in reference to a group affiliation such as party identification or as a member of a racial group, the underlying plot given by that conception of self simplifies information-processing and thus enables behavior.

The narrative framework also shares with the Michigan school model a conception of political behavior grounded in social psychological theory. Agents have long-term political predispositions that are learned early in life (most notably party identification), and these are mainly developed in childhood through socialization

mechanisms such as the family and the school, or what scholars label, “primary reference groups” (Campbell et.al. 1960: 162). Agents are also located in certain social positions within the social structure by such traits as class, education and “race”. And, finally, agents are affected by the political environment and other factors such as how agents perceive campaigns, elected officials, and their issue stances. These are important for understanding political behaviors such as voting or even contacting public officials (Knoke 1990: 31). In sum, political behavior is the result of a variety of forces and factors that impinge on agent decision-making, ranging from the social location of the actor to perceptions of candidates and issues as well as an agents’ psychological-cognitive framework for understanding politics. The narrative framework shares with the Michigan School the belief that agents are socially located by certain political categories, and that early life experiences condition the types of political behaviors agents will engage in. The narrative-model also sees the importance of short-term environmental factors as important for understanding and explaining the political behavior of actors.

The narrative framework of behavior also has affinities with the Columbia school model of behavior that emphasizes the degree to which political behavior is understood in network terms. The networks in which individuals are embedded, including group affiliations such as labor unions and racial groups, provide the means for the transmission of political information, thus enabling agents to make decisions and act politically according to the decisions made (and information shared) with others (Berelson et.al. 1954: 73). This model is sociological in the sense that social group attachments and affiliations matter a great deal for explaining why certain agents act politically, and the calculus that goes into such activities. While the Columbia school model borrows from

social psychology just as the Michigan School model does, the key difference is the embeddedness of agents in networks that serve to communicate information. The current narrative framework has affinities with the Columbia School model primarily because of the emphasis on the social transmission of political values, norms and traditional practices. The narrative-model of behavior argues that the social transmission of pertinent political information occurs through cross-cutting networks, or what has been termed subaltern counterpublics. The difference between social networks and subaltern counterpublics is that social networks usually depend upon interpersonal interaction, whereas subaltern counterpublics also include structural interactions; e.g. how broader social collectivities, such as racial groups, share information and cultivate group norms, values and experiences. Finally, emphasizing that information is communicated through plots matches well with the network emphasis of the Columbia school in that networks are seen as constituted by social interaction and therefore are carriers of political information that is required for political activity to be meaningful and intelligible.[37]

Differences with Major Models

The most prominent difference of the narrative framework approach to political behavior from the prevailing models in the field concerns its relationship to the rational-actor or rational-choice theory of behavior (Downs 1957; Riker and Ordeshook 1968; Fiorina 1981). The essential ideas of a rational-choice framework for political behavior include political parties who seek to maximize votes to win elections, and voters who seek to maximize their own personal utility in choosing those candidates that best represent their own interests. Essentially, the model argues that parties and voters are

[37] See the work of David Knoke (1990) for a modern discussion of network analysis and how information is both generated and shared by agents engaged in what he terms "egonetworks" (40).

"rational" in that they are able to weigh the benefits and costs associated with engaging in certain forms of political action, e.g. to garner votes (parties) or to pursue those candidates tied to parties which best represent their interests (voters). When the benefits out weigh the costs, political activity does not occur, or at least it is minimized. The benefit of such a model is that it is parsimonious: actors have pre-determined preferences or interests that induce them to engage (or not to engage) in certain forms of political activity. Once those preferences are known (or specified), predictions can be made as to whether agents will engage in certain forms of political activity given the relative weight associated with the benefits and costs of any particular activity.

The problem from a narrative framework is that the a priori specification of preferences in the rational-choice model makes it an impoverished theoretical tool for explaining how preferences are generated. A narrative framework presumes that preferences are not given a priori, but rather result from human interaction and the temporal as well as spatial configurations of that interaction. The rational-choice model neglects to see how agents are embedded into social relationships that can change and alter preference orderings. Of course, those committed to the rational-choice framework could suggest mechanisms for preference change, but these are exogenous to the model; the model itself cannot necessarily account for preference altering without a theoretical specification of the mechanism by which preferences can be changed (for an exception, see Fiorina 1981 and his conception of the "running tally"). Even if the rational-actor model can generate a theoretical mechanism for preference change, the assumption is still that agents act based upon what their interests are. But, this begs the question of how agents know what their interests are if there is no specification of a mechanism by which

interests are generated that is internal to the model itself. The narrative framework takes issue with the way in which rational-choice theories of behavior neglect to see how preferences and interests are generated via social and political processes of interaction over time.

The narrative framework also takes issue with the Michigan school's emphasis on the "fixedness" of early learned political identifications. While the narrative framework does agree with the Michigan school's idea of early learned and socialized political identifications, it rejects the idea promoted by the Michigan school model that these early learned identifications are set and relatively impervious to change later on in an individual's life cycle.[38] The narrative framework sees this suggestion as tantamount to indicating that political processes, structures and interactions have little or no impact on the social-psychology of individual political decision-making. This commitment is at odds with the narrative framework's commitment to provide a theoretical basis for contestation over political identifications, whether they are for political parties or other groups, including racial groups. To indicate that early learned and socialized sources of political identity are "fixed" indicates an apolitical model of political behavior.

Is The Narrative-Framework of Behavior Unique?

The narrative framework of political behavior which underlies the conceptual model of racial narratives is unique primarily because of its commitment to questions of ontology, or, the existential question of what it means to be a particular person.[39] The

[38] Please note: there is a lively debate within the political behavior literature as to whether such early learned political commitments as party identification cannot be swayed or changed by political processes such as campaigns and elections. For an overview of this debate, see Sears and Funk 1999, pgs. 1-3.

[39] When this statement is made, it is not meant to suggest some determinative conception of self as defined by only one aspect of social and political life. Despite the emphasis placed in this study on race, other sources of self include gender, sexual orientation as well as class. While theoretical literature speculates on the "intersectionality" of these social and political categories, the current study focuses on race while

emphasis placed on human identity as being defined by one's place in narratives that orient the self and providing meaning to human action is unique in the sense that most of the models described above, while recognizing the social foundations of human political activity, neglect to deal with questions of meaning, and therefore the existential implications of such questions. While it might be the case that a scholarly division of labor is required in that philosophers ought to deal with questions of existence while social scientists should deal with questions that do not require philosophical speculation, it is important to note that the current narrative framework combines a philosophical desire to inquire into the foundations of human existence and meaning with a social scientific commitment to creating models based upon assumptions that can be tested using empirical evidence. There is no reason why the two commitments cannot be combined into one framework.

On the philosophical side, political behavior would benefit from an appraisal of how methodological (and epistemological) commitments by scholars seem to preclude excursions into questions of human existence and meaning. Because what it means to be a particular sort of person and the meaning associated with such a statement is hard to specify, quantify and therefore test in the traditional sense does not mean that such questions are unimportant (or not relevant) for understanding and explaining political action and behavior. Of course, one response might be that it is difficult to ascertain answers to these types of questions given the heterogeneity of human experience. While this answer indicates a sort of humility in regards to political behavior research, it provides little in the way of an answer to a deeper, more problematic question: does a

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recognizing that subsequent analysis using the narrative framework should include race, gender, class and sexual orientation, their intersection and how these intersections affect individual political behavior.

commitment to certain epistemological and methodological assumptions preclude asking certain questions? The value of the narrative framework is that it retains a sense of humility while also trying to deal with the thorny theoretical and empirical issue of human existence and meaning.

On the social scientific side, a commitment to model specification given certain assumptions and arguments is not precluded by the narrative framework described here. The narrative framework, much like any other analytical framework, begins with specifying certain assumptions that then lead to theoretical propositions and hypotheses that can be tested using a variety of empirical evidence. To say that one is studying narratives is not to therefore indicate that one is not a social scientist; a commitment to theoretical and empirical rigor is extremely important for the current narrative framework especially since it is unorthodox in its approach to explaining political behavior; e.g. relying on philosophical argumentation regarding how narratives help to constitute an agent's sense of self and therefore provide meaning to that agent's political action.

In short, the narrative framework is unique because of its blending of philosophical and social scientific commitments. Because of its hybrid nature, the narrative framework seems strange and foreign, but it has the capacity to enrich the study of political behavior by focusing research on forms of empirical evidence and theoretical argumentation that are usually discounted in the field. It is also important to note that the narrative framework shares a great deal with the predominant models of political behavior and therefore is not so strange as it might seem. It seeks to expand knowledge of political behavior by pushing the boundaries of theoretical argument and empirical research.

Conclusion

The argument developed in this chapter centered on several important elements left underspecified in chapter 1. It focused upon what is meant by the concept of "race", it developed a causal model of racial narrative including how racial narratives are generated and changed, and the degree to which they inform an individual's conception of social identity and thus, their political behavior. The chapter also situated the specified model in two literatures; the racial politics literature specifically, and the political behavior literature more generally. The conclusion from this analysis was that the conceptual model of racial narratives can contribute to the racial politics literature and that the narrative framework not only has similarities with the dominant models of political behavior (as well as differences), but it is also unique in its combination of philosophical and social scientific commitments.

The next task is to empirically validate the conceptual model of racial narratives by looking at three historical periods, and seeing how the presence of dominant and subordinate racial narratives affects African-American political behavior. The next chapter seeks to begin this analysis by emphasizing the historical period ranging from the founding of the U.S. until 1865. We now turn to this analysis.

Chapter 3: Establishing the White Supremacist Narrative: 1619-1865

Given the conceptual and theoretical arguments of chapters 1 and 2, it is now time to apply the racial narrative approach to American history. The goal is to see how, and to what degree, particular racial narratives affect American social, political, and economic life and, most importantly, the political behavior of African-Americans. Of particular importance in this chapter is the development of a white supremacist racial narrative that had its beginnings in the early religious and political thought of English colonists coming to North America, and that was subsequently developed and hardened throughout the post-Revolutionary period and into U.S. Civil War. The purpose of this chapter is to describe how a white supremacist racial narrative was developed and informed early American political, social and economic life. Therefore, the chapter will focus on historical events and agents that helped to create such a racial narrative, but it does not seek to provide a comprehensive review of early American history. Instead, it focuses on certain themes present throughout American history, and the degree to which they are linked together via the white supremacist racial narrative. The argument of this chapter is that early contact between the English and Africans generated a conception of the white European as better than the African in a variety of ways. Given this early conception of white European supremacy, the major political creeds that informed the founding of the U.S., labeled here as early liberalism and republican pluralism, existed along side a narrative of white European superiority. A narrative of white superiority explains the creation of social practices, norms and political institutions that systematically denied Africans participation in the American polity. It provided a set of arguments that allowed American society and its institutions to exclude Africans from social, political and

economic life. The white supremacist racial narrative allowed for American political values to remain intact despite the contradictions between these political values and the treatment of Africans. Several themes will be introduced that show the intersection of American political values and the white supremacist racial narrative. These include: liberty, self-government, paternalism and nationalism. By emphasizing these themes, the chapter will show how the white supremacist racial narrative provided both a justification for African inequality, and a means to solidify American political values. Therefore, this narrative can explain the creation of racist institutions and practices and how those institutions and practices could exist in a society committed to liberty and self-government. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how Africans, despite their systematic exclusion from the U.S. political community, were able to show contradictions in the dominant white supremacist narrative, and began to articulate a counter narrative showing that Africans were, indeed, members of the American polity, and ought to resist white domination. This counter-narrative was important for politically mobilizing Africans, particularly in creating African churches.

What is a White Supremacist Racial Narrative?

A white supremacist racial narrative is defined by a set of interrelated characteristics:

1. It creates essentializing identity categories whereby one racial group, “white”, is dominant, while other racial groups, such as Africans are seen as not only subordinate, but also “inferior”.

2. The essentialized identity categories are linked to broader social practices of exclusion accompanied by a racial ideology that gives legitimacy to such exclusionary social practices.
3. Finally, politically powerful coalitions of actors seek to pursue such a narrative by institutionalizing policies and mechanisms to assure the continued dominance of "whites".

Throughout early American history, especially beginning with the English colonists that arrived in North America in the early 17th century, a set of essentializing identity categories were created concerning white Europeans and Africans. To show how these essentializing identity categories were created, it is important to begin with the religious and political thought of the early English colonists.

Puritan Religious and Political Thought

The early English colonists brought with them a conception of the "divine" that was linked to the establishment of a political community. For the Puritans, there was no division between the *political* and the *divine*. Both were fused together in that the political community was first and foremost a divinely inspired collectivity designed to serve and promote sacred religious values. To be a member of the newly established colonies in North America meant that one was part of a covenant with God that formed the legitimate basis of political rule. Membership was determined by one's acceptance of God's grace and love. This can be seen clearly in John Winthrop's (1630: 11, 14) writing:

> "first all true Christians are of one body in Christ…The ligaments of this body which knit together are loue…Noe body can be perfect which wants its propper

> ligamentes…All the partes of this body being thus vnited are made soe contiguous in a speciall relacion as they must needes partake of each others strength and infirmity, joy, and sorrowe, weale and woe. If one member suffers all suffer with it, if one be in honour, all reioyce with it…for the worke wee haue in hand, it is by a mutuall consent through a special ouerruleing providence, and more then an ordinary approbation of the Churches of Christ to seeke out a place of Cohabitation and Consorteshipp vnder a due forme of Government both ciuill and ecclesiasticall…The end is to improue our liues to doe more seruice to the Lord the comforte and encrease of the body of christen whereof wee are members that our selues and posterity may be the better preserued from the Common corrupcions of this euill world to serue the Lord and worke out our Salvacion vnder the power and purity of his holy Ordinances."

Winthrop argues that an acceptance of God's love and grace made one a member of a divinely inspired polity that was to serve the interests of God. The Puritans saw themselves as a special people, bound to one another through the relationship they had with God. The importance of this relationship is that it emphasized a belief in, and commitment to, Christian values as a prerequisite for public recognition. While Winthrop did not specify in this writing that a lack of such commitment meant the negation of public agency, it can be inferred from his emphasis on the public value associated with Christian conceptions of the "bonds of love and affection" shared between Christians.

Winthrop also assumed that human beings were hierarchically arranged (1630:7): "God Almightie in his most holy and wise providence hath soe disposed of the

Condicion of mankinde, as in all times some must be riche and some poore, some highe and eminent in power and dignitie; others meane and in subieccion." For Winthrop, those who were "high and eminent in power" were Christians and those who were "mean and in subjection" were non-Christians. While Winthrop's conception of human hierarchy (and inequality) was a basis for arguing that human society had a moral duty to take care of those lower in the hierarchy, his argument indicates that early Puritan thinking already recognized hierarchy, and provided a justification for such hierarchy based upon God's divine creation of it.

It is important to note that the Puritans also assumed a fallen humanity; that human beings (since the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden) were plagued by sin. The importance of human sin is that those who remained in their sinful state (without seeking forgiveness from God) deserved to be severely punished. The severity of the punishment was attached to the obligation humans had to God. Humans had an infinite obligation to God, so the punishment for sin "was deserving of infinite punishment" (Edwards 1734: 66). The point of emphasizing sin was to create in humans a desire to be in relationship with God; to renounce engaging in those acts or ways of thinking that separated man from their Creator. The political implications of sin indicated that those individuals who did not (or would not) renounce their sinful ways or commit themselves to God deserved to be cast aside as non-members of a political community (Smedley 1993: 81).

For the Puritans, political life was informed by a commitment to Christian values and ways of acting and thinking. The importance of emphasizing the nexus between political membership and one's relationship to God is that the Puritans brought with them

a cosmological worldview that linked politics and religion; the two were inseparable. The problem is that the fusion of the political and the divine also provided them with a set of concepts to designate those individuals or groups who were not Christians (and who did not act in accordance with Christian values) as the "Other". The best examples of such concepts include the "heathen" and the "savage".

In English thinking, the concept of the "heathen" denoted a lack of commitment to Christian values and ways of life; to not recognize God as the one true Creator, and to engage in a lifestyle typified by idleness (Smedley 1993: 82). The concept of the "heathen" was loaded with intense meanings for the English, particularly because it suggested that individuals or groups so classified lacked "civilization". The close link between "heathen" and "uncivilized" allowed early English settlers to appropriate the land of indigenous peoples, and provided a belief that the English settlers were pursuing a Godly mission to bring "civilization" and Christianity to the New World.[40] Linked to the concept of "heathen" was also the idea of "savage".

For the English, a "savage" was "first of all a 'heathen,' a godless and immoral creature, "wicked, barbarous and uncivil." He was lazy, filthy, evil, superstitious, and an idol worshiper, and was given to lying, stealing, treachery, murder and double-dealing" (Smedley 1993: 60). To be a "savage" meant a lack of personhood for the English, and by extension, those who were so designated could be violently repressed, killed and destroyed. Such a designation also created for the English a desire to "civilize" those groups of individuals who were "savages". The English believed that their God-given mission to come to the New World not only meant that they could forcefully control

[40] While the literature indicates that the term "heathen" was linked to early English contacts with the Native peoples of North America, it was also applied to English interactions with Africans, particularly since they too lacked a commitment to Christian mores. See Smedley 1993: 106.

"savages" but that such control was a mechanism that would enable the Christianization of savage peoples.

In the English mind, "heathen" and "savage" was linked to the differences in color that marked Africans:

> "In England…the concept of blackness was loaded with intense meaning. Long before they found that some men were black, Englishmen found in the idea of blackness a way of expressing some of their most ingrained values. No other color except white conveyed so much emotional impact. As described by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the meaning of *black* before the sixteenth century included, "Deeply stained with dirt; soiled, dirty, foul…Having dark or deadly purposes, malignant; pertaining to or involving death, deadly; baneful, disastrous, sinister" (Jordan 1977: 7)(emphasis original).

The term "black" was accorded less value and worth by virtue of its negative connotations, and the term "white" was exalted and deemed to be of greater value. For the early English colonists, to be "white" suggested "purity", "virginity", "virtuousness", "beauty", "beneficence" and to be created "In God's Image" (Jordan 1977: 7; Goldenberg 2009: 93). The duality and contrast of the two terms meant to represent something unique to a group of individuals, and suggested that to be "black" was to be of a lower status, and to be destructive to social and cosmological order (Jenkins 1935: 5-6).[41] To be "white" suggested a superior status, and the ability to create social order given that superior status. The central conclusion was that "blackness" was of less worth than "whiteness". The emphasis placed on color differences became a metaphor for

[41] See Goldman 2009: 93-103 for a description of how early Christian thinkers perceived the color "black".

distinguishing between Africans and white Europeans. It was also linked to cultural and social differences between Africans and white Europeans.

The social and political practices of Africans were also different from English social and political practices. The problem drew from the English directly comparing their social and political values and institutions to those of the African, and finding those of the African wanting (Jordan 1977: 27). The perception on the part of the English that Africans were "uncivilized" (e.g. lacking in Western or English social, cultural and political practices), allowed them to further describe them as lacking a sense of humanity, of being "brutes" or exemplifying traits of "beasts" (Jordan 1977: 28).[42] The dual linkage of "heathen" and "beast" in the English understandings of their interactions with Africans suggested that Africans were the complete opposite of themselves, and the English created a circular argument to buttress their treatment of Africans. All told, the English seemed to assume that Africans lacked civilized institutions that could regulate behavior, and provide for order. Of course, the English perceived the correct order as their own, which made it difficult for the English to interpret what they perceived as the opposite to have meaning and coherence.[43] Indeed, the ability to see African cultural, social and political practices as co-equal with their own despite differences was lacking, largely due to the conception of the African as the marginalized "Other".

What other evidence can be given to show the development of this antipathy on the part of the English colonists for the African? Historians have debated whether a "proto-racism" informed early English contacts with Africans, but there is documentary

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[42] One such argument arises in the question of the relationship between Africans and Apes (See Jordan 1977: 28-32).

[43] The English had developed a strong sense of ethnocentrism by the time of their interactions with Africans. For an overview of English ethnocentrism, see Smedley 1993, Chapter 3.

evidence that suggests the English saw the African as the "Other". Beginning in the 1620s, historians noted differences in how white indentured servants and African servants were treated and valued:

> "Blacks had considerably higher valuations from the outset, which indicated far longer – perhaps lifetime – service; black runaways were punished differently than whites, apparently because the former's terms were already too long to be extended; black servants were forbidden to bear arms; black women were tithable – that is taxed as potential field workers, unlike white female servants" (Vaughan 1995: 142).

The legal statuses of Africans made them different than their white counterparts, but underlying such differences were also English perceptions of Africans as engaging in sexual perversions, as being "beast" like, and rejecting Christian mores (Vaughan 1995: 144). The fact that the English perceived Africans in such derogatory terms provided a basis for the English to label Africans as simply "Negers" even when Africans had Christianized names (Vaughan 1995: 158). For example, a census conducted in Virginia in 1625 listed all of the inhabitants by name, but when Africans were listed, they were separated from the other inhabitants. All of the inhabitants (even if they were not of English nationality) were labeled as "Englishe" and Africans had their own separate category, "Negers". The fact that Africans were designated by color and not nationality has suggested to some historians an underlying antipathy towards Africans by the English (Vaughan 1995: 158). Finally, social and political elites in Virginia such as Captain John Smith referred to Africans as, "those fryed Regions of black brutish Negers", indicating

that elites within the English colonies conceived of Africans as defined by their physical traits that were then tied to their cultural or political agency (Vaughan 1995: 147).

Beyond the evidence presented above, the early English conceptions of the African borrowed heavily from a biblical interpretation of the African's "blackness" that drew upon the curse supposedly given by God to the descendents of Ham, a son of Noah who violated Noah's injunction to remain sexually pure. The curse put on Ham (and his descendents) was used by English writers such as George Best, a well known explorer and author, to explain the African's "blackness":

> "the probable cause of this blacknesse proceedeth of some natural infection of the first inhabitants of that Countrey [Africa], and so all the whole progenie of them descended, are still polluted with the same blot of infection…so blacke and lothsome, that it might remaine a spectacle of disobedience to all the world" (quoted in Vaughan 1995: 164).

Other authors, such as the Reverend Thomas Cooper, made similar arguments, but added that Ham's brothers (due to their obedience) were to rule over the descendents of Ham: "this cursed race of Cham [shall be] scatter[ed] towards the South in *Affrica*…[and Ham's brothers] shall be *Lord* over his *cursed brother*, and his posteritie" (quoted in Vaughan 1995: 164). The fact that early English colonists used biblical stories to paint the African as the "Other" shows how the religious thought of the English colonists was tied to perceptions of color difference, providing a divinely-inspired justification for the problematic connotations that "blackness" brought to the fore for the English.

Overall, the initial interactions of the English and Africans were characterized by the English developing a strong sense of racial group identity over and against Africans. The color difference of "white" and "black" coupled with the social and political implications of these terms (civilized vs. uncivilized, religious vs. heathen) allowed for the generation of patterns characterized by white subordination of Africans. Indeed, the patterns of subordination and control underwritten by the conceptions of color and cultural as well as political differences informed how the English were to interact with Africans in the context of the North American English colonies.

The English Colonies, Slavery and the hardening of White Supremacy

According to scholars, the English colonists of North America began importing Africans to work as slaves in 1619 (Feagin 2001; Stampp 1956: 18; Jordan 1977: 44). The reasons for the importation of larger number of Africans to the English colonies are hotly debated, but several currents of thought were working to move the English toward an acceptance of human bondage. Of particular importance here are the economic needs of the colonists, and a sense that Africans could be used as slaves, given the implications of their "blackness" and beast-like characteristics.

To begin, the colonists arrived in North America with a problem: how to create a society and provide for its sustenance. How were the colonists going to provide for food, shelter and the like, and also establish social and political order? To what degree could the embryonic society coalesce and become self-sustaining? It did so through the development of patterns of social organization such as labor and wage systems, as well as a commitment to English social and political values. The key economic issue was the discrepancy between land and labor: the former was in great supply, the latter scarce.

How to make the land of the colonies productive for the new colonists was an important problem to solve. One way was through the use of certain forms of labor, including wage labor, but more importantly, African slave labor (Jordan 1977: 47).

A conception developed among the English that only those who were not "men" – brutes – or those who were evil and desired to destroy social order, could be used as slaves. The early conception of the African as being bestial, in-human and destructive of social, political and economic order allowed white European colonists to enslave Africans; during the late 17th and early 18th centuries, African human bondage, as well as greater acceptance of its usage, emerged in the English Colonies particularly in the agriculturally developing south (Jordan 1977: 75). While slavery and the underlying justifications for it were critiqued by anti-slavery advocates such as the Quakers of Pennsylvania and other anti-slavery groups, slavery became more elaborated and protected through local law (such as slave codes) throughout this period (Jordan 1977: 195; Vaughan 1995). The effects of these slave codes limited not only the public activities of Africans held in bondage (for example, they could not testify at trials and they were barred from selling their own labor), but also those free Africans that existed in the North and South. African slavery in the English colonies became a social, political and economic system that was validated by a set of rigid and essentializing racial group identities that was underwritten by a racial ideology of "white superiority".[44]

The central ideas underlying the colonial justification for slavery were based upon a developing sense of "white superiority" especially in regards to the newly emerging questions of membership and political community that were to be important for the

[44] Note: there is a lively debate in the historical literature as to whether racism preceded slavery, or it was created after slavery to justify it. See Vaughan 1995 for a review of this debate.

American Revolution in the late 18th Century. Africans could be subjugated, controlled and constrained because of their inability to be "civilized", and become full-fledged citizens of the colonial political communities (Feagin 2001). Given this early interaction between white Europeans and Africans, how were Africans to be treated by society?

First, they could be marginalized. Africans were seen as inferior, and this inferiority suggested that Africans could not participate in the workings of colonial political, economic and social life. Secondly, Africans could be oppressed in by having their choices severely restricted. Finally, Africans could also be dominated as they were seen as lacking the capacity to be full members of their political communities. Africans were seen as apolitical beings that needed to be controlled and limited in their choices based on Africans lacking in political agency and selfhood. Moreover, slavery was an institutional expression of the white supremacist racial narrative insofar as it was a system that depended upon African inferiority and inequality for its legitimacy.

A shift began to occur in the late 18th century concerning the place of slavery, and by extension, the role of Africans in colonial life. With the onset of the American Revolution, certain political values were elaborated that provided the basis for the newly formed American Republic. Of particular significance were the political values of liberty and self-government. These two interrelated political values seemed to conflict with the treatment of African in American society, yet the white supremacist racial narrative provided a justification for African marginalization, oppression and domination, while also enabling the political values of liberty and self-government to remain intact. To put the argument differently, the white supremacist racial narrative existed alongside

American commitments to liberty and self-government, providing a rationale for the control of Africans and giving legitimacy to such control.

Shifting to Revolutionary Thought

From the early to mid 18th century a shift occurred from religiously-based, traditional forms of thinking and institutions, to a critical materialist examination of the "natural" world, and to the use of methods, including deductive reasoning, to arrive at critical understandings of how to order a society, especially its social, political and economic institutions (Jordan 1977: 215). The shift to thinking about the "natural" foundation of human existence represented a paradigmatic shift in how Africans were seen in the then developing U.S. society. What emerged in the mid to late 18th century was a set of practices, theories and social values that helped to create strong opposition to slavery, but also accepted African "inferiority".[45] The shift toward deductive reasoning in European social and political thought provided a powerful argument for critiquing acquired traditional practices of social life. Slavery was among such practices.

The suggestion here is not that the social and political theories used to justify the American Revolution were explicitly racist, but that they existed alongside a prominent and meaningful white supremacist narrative that had been in development and informed

[45] It is important to note that this shift in thinking enabled humans to begin to classify human beings according to physical attributes. Such classifications, while cloaked in objectivity due to their being based upon inductive reasoning, had the effect of "naturalizing" racial inequalities as physical attributes were linked to cultural or social ones. For example, the work of Carolus Linnaeus, particularly his *Systemae Naturae* (1735) is instructive. In this work, he classified Africans as, "*black*; phlegmatic; relaxed; hair black, frizzled; skin silky; nose flat; lips tumid; *women without shame*; they lactate profusely; *crafty*; *indolent*; *negligent*; *governed by caprice*. This classification can be contrasted with the European: "*white*; sanguine; muscular; hair long, flowing; eyes blue; *gentle; acute; inventive*; *governed by laws*" (quoted in Smedley 1993: 164) (emphases added).

the social practices and political institutions of the colonies for some time.[46] This helps to explain how English colonists not only created a new nation on a set of political, social and economic principles seemingly in opposition to slavery, but how they also created a nation premised upon conceptions of Africans as "inferior" beings who could be used, and perceived as, human property.

What then is the substance of the paradigmatic shift in European political thinking that focused upon the "natural" world and provided the basis for a new nation based upon political principles deduced from the workings of that "natural" world? The two major sources of thought that will be important for this study are early liberalism and republican-pluralist political theory. Explicating these patterns of social and political thought as the basis of the American founding shows that American institutions were based upon a commitment to individualism, freedom, self-government and private property while at the same time providing a justification not only for African slavery, but for the exclusion of Africans (and others including white male property-less individuals) from full political membership in American society (Smith 1997).

Early Liberalism

Early liberalism encompasses a pattern of social and political thought that was developed in the mid to late 17th century by such writers as Rene de Descartes (1641), Thomas Hobbes (1651), John Locke (1690), Adam Smith(1776), and others (Schumaker et.al. 2008: 27). The essential ideas of liberalism originated in Enlightenment thought that occurred in European political and social thinking that desired to no longer see and comprehend the world through traditional or established patterns of thought. These

[46] The argument is not that the white supremacist narrative simply existed alongside the political values of the American Revolution. The political values presumed a certain conception of human agency that allowed the white supremacist narrative to inform American political thought. See my discussion below.

writers sought to understand the "natural" physical world, and to use these insights to inform the development of political communities.

Especially in the works of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke we see some of the best theoretical development of early liberalism. For both thinkers, human beings were born free as well as equal (Hobbes 1651: 183-184; Locke 1690: 3-4). These two thinkers took very different interpretations of this initial conception of personhood, but they agreed that no human being was bound by any other, and that each had some very basic equality about them: all had their own conceptions of the good which they wished to pursue (Hobbes 1651: 160-1). The question became how to deal with individuals pursuing their own interests given a state of liberty: e.g. that no one could claim a better set of interests than an other, or that individuals could, " order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons, as they think fit…depending upon the will of no man" (Locke 1690: 3). Both thinkers derive this idea of human equality and freedom from basic premises about the "natural" world, e.g. from the existence of men in what has been termed a state of nature, or that state in which men find themselves where they are not governed by a common ruler.

Locke and Hobbes both perceived a problem: given that individuals were free and that all persons are equal at birth, how was one to control for the potential conflicts that would and could occur between men in this natural state? For both theorists, government was the best solution to the problem of divergent interests, albeit for very different reasons (see for example Locke 1690: 8; Hobbes 1651: 223-8). For both theorists, if political societies were to be created, the form of government would need to allow individuals to express both their freedom and equality in the choosing of a government to

limit and yet constrain those freedoms. Both theorists (and others such as Rousseau (1762)) advocated for a social contract between individuals: insofar as individuals consented to the creation of a mechanism to limit and control their conflicting interests, government itself was not necessarily impinging upon an individual's "natural liberty", but helping individuals to pursue their varied interests so long as the government itself did not become "tyrannical"; that is, over-step its bounds by too greatly reducing men's liberties.[47] Early American thinkers such as Thomas Paine (1776: 102) made this point quite clearly by suggesting that "society in every state is a blessing, but government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state, an intolerable one." For Paine, government was needed to restrain the vices associated with men pursuing their own interests, but it could not trample on the freedoms than man possessed. Thus, "here, then, is the origin and rise of government; namely, a mode rendered necessary by the inability of moral virtue to govern the world; here, too, is the design and end of government, viz., freedom and security" (Paine 1776: 121).

The social contract ideal implied that the best form of government is one in which governmental power is limited, controlled and checked (Dahl 1989; Madison 1995; Adams 1765). Political institutions are given specific powers and they are able to check one another's power. The key political value is the fear of a centralization of political power that could quash individual liberty.[48] As John Adams (1765: 110) indicated, the early English colonists:

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[47] It is at this point that Locke and Hobbes really seem to depart ways, despite their theoretical intersection: Locke continues to advocate for the ideal of *consent* to underwrite political institutions, whereas for Hobbes the idea of the "Leviathan" as based solely upon *consent* seems debatable; see Hobbes 1651: 227.
[48] That liberalism "fears" centralization of political power is not meant to imply that liberalism is based upon a "politics of fear". Liberals see the need for centralization of political power, but want to constrain it so that individuals retain the ability to be free.

> "saw clearly, that popular powers must be placed, as a guard, a countroul, a balance, to the powers of the monarch, and the priest, in every government, or else it would soon become the man of sin, the whore of Babylon, the mystery of iniquity, a great and detestable system of fraud, violence, and usurpation."

The response was to therefore create a system of government based upon consent of those that were governed, originally forged through a social contract that ensured membership in the political community.

The notion of consent was crucial for early liberal writers, as we see clearly in Thomas Jefferson's work (1776: 129):

> "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the *consent of the governed*."

Consent was important, because it allowed for political community members to retain the power to limit and constrain governmental action in so far as it could be used to control and restrain human liberty (Jefferson 1776: 129). These early writers also dealt with the question of how to generate this consent. Most writers emphasized the importance of electoral accountability (Paine 1776: 121; Jefferson 1813: 185). Periodic elections could allow individuals to: "displace an unfaithful servant before the mischief he meditates may be irremediable" (Jefferson 1813: 187). Political communities needed government to protect the rights of its members, but members of the political community also needed to restrain governments. Locke, Paine, Adams and Jefferson argued that

government served to protect individual interests, and that it had to stay within necessary bounds imposed by the "natural" condition of mankind (e.g. both free and equal). Their emphasis is on a negative conception of liberty. As Benjamin Constance described (1816: 838-839), early liberal thinking concerning the concept of liberty meant:

> "For each [individual] it is the right to be subjected only to the laws and to be neither arrested, detained, put to death nor maltreated in any way by the arbitrary will of one or more individuals. It is the right of everyone to express their opinion, choose a profession and practice it, to dispose of property, and even to abuse it; to come and go without permission, and without having to account for their motives or undertakings…Finally it is everyone's right to exercise some influence on the administration of the government, either by electing all or particular officials, or through representations, petitions, demands to which the authorities are more or less compelled to pay heed".

The early liberalism of Hobbes, Locke, Paine, Adams and Jefferson suggested that given minimal assumptions about the physical world and human motivations, political communities could be created that would serve to protect individual rights, limit the (possibly) destructive aspects of conflicts between human ends, and provide for order and stability. A commitment to negative liberty would enable humans to choose their own ends, but also generate a necessary check on government as individuals would be able to limit the exercise of governmental power. These authors also provided for another extension of the minimal assumption about human liberty: humans ought to be free to produce and sell commodities in free and open exchanges.

The development of the market concept of human economic interaction is premised upon the role of private property, and the ability to sell one's property (Locke 1690), but also the notion of "natural" laws governing market interaction (Lowi 1978; Smith 1776), including the idea that the individual pursuit of self-interest benefited all individuals in a society. More important, however, was the idea of the market as better facilitating man's freedom to pursue property, wealth and, more broadly, his own interests.

The free-market was a mechanism to counterbalance the control exerted by governments over the freedom of the individual. At a theoretical level, the market exemplified the ability of individuals to choose freely how to use their private property as best they sought fit, and it helped to buttress the political values of early liberalism, including a commitment to individualism, freedom and the ability to own and use private property. Above all, however, the market also allowed for a conception of equal economic opportunity to develop: assuming that the market was fair, and people could enter and exit the market at will, the successes that individuals achieve in market competition were also seen as just.[49] This conception provided the justification for inequalities throughout American society, and it had the effect of solidifying the role that free-market capitalism would have in American economic development and the inequalities that flowed from such an arrangement.

All told, early liberalism was a transformative pattern of social and political thought that was extremely important to the American founding. Early liberalism developed the ideals of individualism, freedom, free-market exchanges and constraints on

[49] Of course, market exchanges, particularly in regards to slave labor, would not meet this assumption. The crucial point is that inequalities resulting from market exchanges are not patently unjust. See my depiction of this argument in Chapter 5.

political institutions. Such noted intellectuals as John Adams, Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson all seemed to take the doctrines of early liberalism as the basis for their political assumptions at least insofar as they were concerned with the "tyrannical" control exerted by the British Crown over the colonies and their recourse for such tyranny.[50] It would be a mistake to indicate that early liberalism was the only pattern of political beliefs that informed the American Revolution. While early liberalism provided a justification for government, what was still lacking was the substantive value of political involvement in one's political community. This was to be supplied by republican-pluralist political theory.

Republican-Pluralism

The other central set of political beliefs important to the American founding could be called "republican-pluralism". Of particular importance was a conception of citizen virtue and participation in one's political community. Republican-pluralism provided the needed set of values to counteract the individualizing tendencies of early liberalism. It provided a set of arguments regarding human civic participation that suggested humans ought to be involved in the functioning of their political community. It was concerned with pursuing the "common good", and created a structural argument for approximating this "common good".

Republican-pluralism begins with the argument that, "self-government is the basis of liberty, together with the right of citizens to participate-within a constitutional framework which creates distinct roles for leading social forces-in the government of their [citizen's] own common business" (Held 2006: 34). When citizens actively

[50] While my depiction of early liberal thought does not deal with how liberals accommodated slavery and racial oppression into their theories of government and the economy, this is because many of these authors (including Thomas Jefferson) assumed such arguments did not apply to Africans.

participate in the decision-making processes of their communities, they can effectively rule themselves (Aristotle 1981: 188). This claim is then complimented by a structural argument that suggests many different elements of society are represented in political institutions (Aristotle 1981: 190). The bringing together of the actively engaged citizen and balanced or mixed political institutions results in the argument that decision-making can approximate the "common good" in that the community chooses its own ends, and is only through participation on the part of all that these collective ends can be assured (Rousseau 1762:153; Viroli 1999: 35). Overall, this argument suggests that an actively engaged citizenry and balanced institutions can help to achieve a "common good" that unites all citizens (Machiavelli 1996: 16-19).

This conception of individuals as being civically minded and having the capacity to engage in public deliberation with other citizens also relies on a conception of the social collective as prior to the individual. Early puritan religious thought brings this point out most clearly. For John Winthrop (1630: 11), citizens are bonded together and help to form a "body" based upon a commitment to Christ, the church, and Christian love:

> "The diffinition which the Scripture giues vs of loue is this loue is the bond of perfection. First, it is a bond, or ligament…it makes the worke perfect. There is noe body but consistes of partes and that which knits these partes together giues the body its perfeccion, because it makes each parte soe contiguous to other as thereby they doe mutually participate with each other, both in strengthe and infirmity in pleasure and paine."

Winthrop's (1630: 14) conception of Christians as forming a body with its parts linked together then provides a political basis for the creation of a self-sustaining community:

> "for the worke wee haue in hand, it is by a mutuall consent through a speciall overruleing providence, and a more then an ordinary approbation…to seeke out a place of Cohabitation and Consorteshipp vnder a due forme of Government both ciuill and ecclesiastical. In such cases as this the care of the *publique* must oversway all private respects, by which not onely conscience, but meare Ciuill pollicy doth binde vs; for it is a true rule that perticuler estates cannot subsist in the ruine of the publique" (emphasis added).

Thus, we see the foundations of republican thought in Winthrop's work that emphasizes public duty, a sense of mutual regard for co-equal citizens, and the value of the public over the private interests of a community's individual members. In this conception, individual interests are subservient to larger public concerns. To the degree that the public ought to inform individual behavior, the question becomes how to maintain the value of the public given a wide array of individual interests in society.

One way to go is to allow for individual interests (as expressed through group participation) to control and cancel-out one another, thereby approximating the "common good". The work of James Madison is instructive in this regard. In his famous Federalist # 10, Madison retains the ideal of republican government as serving the "common good". However, he sees potential problems with an engaged citizenry as its groups seem to coalesce into factions that try to pursue their narrow interests at the expense of the "common interest" (Madison 1995: 280). To deal with this problem, Madison suggests

the establishment of new institutional arrangements (representation) to solve problems without crushing either human liberty or the ability to freely associate and pursue public interests that is so important for republican forms of government. Madison further suggests the value of allowing for a wide array of interests in society to help balance competing elements within it. As Madison indicates (1788: 145):

> "It is of great importance in a republic, not only to guard the society against the oppression of its rulers; but to guard one part of the society against the injustice of the other part. Different interests necessarily exist in different classes of citizens. Society itself will be broken down into so many parts, interests and classes of citizens that the rights of individuals or of the minority will be in little danger from interested combinations of the majority."

Madison suggests the many interests in society (and competition between them) will disallow any one interest from predominating, thus allowing for a pursuit of the "common good". Madison also argued for expanding the size of the republic to include a greater variety of interests, thus prohibiting any one interests from dominating. Further:

> "In the extended republic of the United States, and among the great variety of interests, parties and sects which it embraces, a coalition of a majority of the whole society could seldom take place upon any other principles than those of justice and the general good" (Madison 1788: 146).

This argument also buttressed the idea expressed by other writers that civic voluntarism (despite its potential tendency to degenerate into factional conflict) helped to promote a society of active citizens, and thus a citizenry that was able to fulfill its duties

to control and constrain their government (Tocqueville 1835: 60). More importantly, the pluralistic element within republican theory suggested a society organized by free individuals who were publicly participating to achieve some "common good". Insofar as individuals were publicly engaged, and differing groups would offset one another, the end result would approximate the "common good" in that no one group or interest would be able to dominate policy making. This would enable political institutions to control and ameliorate political conflict through mechanisms such as representation, and social practices such as being civically engaged and pursuing individual interests through group participation could allow for a robust sense of citizen-agency. The pluralist emphasis in republican political theory also seemed to provide a normative or moral conception to human public engagement. Insofar as individuals were engaged in group life, they were developing the sensibilities and moral values important for American life, particularly conceptions of hard work, one's commitment to "thrift" (Franklin 1784), and a deeper appreciation of one's political freedoms, particularly that of free association. By being engaged in group life, citizens would learn how to engage in compromise and, since republican-pluralist theory presumed multiple group attachments for individuals, differing norms in each group would enrich the lives of citizens.

During the American founding, early liberalism and republican-pluralist theory were combined in an interesting way: individuals had natural rights to liberty, and in order to use this liberty (and to protect it) they ought to be involved in the public workings of their political communities. These two patterns of political thought had the tendency to reinforce one another, despite some of their conceptual conflicts (e.g. individualism vs. communalism, self-interest vs. the "common good"). Because of the

intersection of early liberalism and republican-pluralist theory, the American founding was based on several political values: individualism, limited government, popular sovereignty, private property, human liberty, communalism, and a not entirely articulate notion of the common good.

The political values of individual liberty and self-government also helped to form the basis for a conception of nationalism, which combined the American political commitments to individual liberty and self-government with the importance of centralized political power, particularly in dealing with national economic questions. Interwoven with the political conception of nationalism was a racial one that emphasized the importance of white control and the denial of Africans as members of the newly created American republic. American nationalism was premised upon individual liberty and self-government that was only accorded to white Americans who were members of the American political community.

American Nationalism

One of the great difficulties that the new American republic faced was how to coordinate the activities and policies of the individual states of the union. The first attempt at such coordination, the Articles of Confederation, did not provide this coordination to the degree needed to meet the requirements of political and economic policy coordination. The Articles of Confederation created a weak centralized government, leaving much power to the individual states. The problems accompanying the Articles provided an impetus for the creation of the American republic, especially in regard to the power of a centralized government.

For some writers during this period, centralization of political power was needed to deal with the many problems facing the new American nation. The lack of economic and political integration among the many states left authors such as Alexander Hamilton searching for a solution. For him, resolution of the centralization of power problem was centered on generating a national government that could control the states. Hamilton argued that the problem the new country faced was one of coordination. For Hamilton, this problem centered on what he perceived as the problems with a local emphasis in American politics (1787: 134):

> "All the passions then we see, of avarice, ambition, interest, which govern most individuals, and all public bodies, fall into the current of the States, and do not flow in the stream of the Genl. Govt. The former therefore will generally be an overmatch for the Genl. Govt. and render any confederacy, in its very nature precarious."

For Hamilton, only a strong national government could solve the problems of coordination and integration while also restraining those problematic human tendencies toward what he called, "the love of power" (1787: 134). Hamilton also realized that in order for the national government to be powerful and retain the ability to legitimately act, it had to accommodate the political values of individual liberty and republicanism (Beer 1999: 40). While he experimented with ideas of centralizing political power through such mechanisms as lifetime appointments to Congress and an executive that mirrored the English hereditary model, Hamilton ultimately suggested that a national government could solve the problems associated with republican government (1787: 136):

> "In every community where industry is encouraged, there will be a division of it into the few & the many. Hence separate interests will arise. There will be debtors & creditors &c. Give all the power to the many, they will oppress the few. Give all the power to the few, they will oppress the many. Both therefore ought to have power, that each may defend itself agst. the other."

In Hamilton's thinking, only a national government with centralized political power could deal with the conflicts originating in the states and in the contrary interests that flowed from a society committed to individual liberty. This conception of centralized political power therefore served as a mechanism to unite the many political communities of the American republic, thereby providing the basis for republican forms of government that emphasized balanced institutions and citizen participation.

For Abraham Lincoln, the same values were important for a functioning American polity. Lincoln stressed that republicanism and liberty could be protected and extended only so long as the nation continued to exist. A good example of Lincoln's conception of the nation can be found in his *Address Delivered at the Dedication of the Cemetery at Gettysburg* (1863). Here, Lincoln details the sacrifices made by soldiers in the U.S. Civil War. He suggests that these sacrifices were made to solidify the values of the American republic, and that the immense costs associated with the U.S. Civil War makes apparent the need to preserve the nation for which they fought (1863: 475):

> "From these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion – that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain – that this nation, under God, shall have a new

> birth of freedom – and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

For Lincoln American nationalism was intertwined with the political values of the American founding; only by preserving the nation could those values long endure. Lincoln was committed to a version of American nationalism that stressed the value of the nation as based upon freedom and self-government. We can also see this commitment quite clearly in his *Speech at Peoria, Illinois* (1854). Here, Lincoln is dealing with the implications of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which was to repeal the Missouri Compromise that was used to balance the differing interests of slave states in the South and free states in the North. For Lincoln, the repeal of the Missouri Compromise was tantamount to violating the values at the base of the American nation (1854: 463):

> "This *declared* indifference, but as I must think, covert *real zeal* for the spread of slavery, I can not but hate. I hate it because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself. I hate it because it deprives our republican example of its just influence in the world – enables the enemies of free institutions, with plausibility, to taunt us as hypocrites – causes the real friends of freedom to doubt our sincerity, and especially because it forces so many really good mean amongst ourselves into an open war with the very fundamental principles of civil liberty – criticizing the Declaration of Independence, and insisting that there is no right principle of action but *self-interest*" (emphasis original).

Lincoln believed that the issue of slavery was one that went to the core of the

American political community insofar as a commitment to slavery violated the political values that were central to the creation of the American polity. Lincoln emphasized the degree to which slavery violated the principle of individuals being able to govern themselves and only be subject to rule by their own consent (1854: 466). He suggested that slavery was the antithesis of a commitment to the rule of law, and to the equal application of laws to all individuals subject to governmental authority (1854: 466). Lincoln's critique of slavery is directly related to his conception of the American nation as one built upon principled commitments to human dignity, the rule of law, and the ability of individuals to govern themselves.

Despite this principled commitment, it is important to note that Lincoln still had difficulty in seeing Africans as full-fledged members of the American political community. Lincoln struggled with what to do with Africans after the abolition of slavery, and he suggested that Africans were not co-equal citizens (1854: 463-464):

> "When it is said that the institution [slavery] exists; and that it is very difficult to get rid of it, in any satisfactory way, I can understand and appreciate the saying. I surely will not blame them [southerners] for not doing what I should not know how to do myself. My first impulse would be to free all the slaves, and send them to Liberia, - to their own native land. But a moment's reflection would convince me, that whatever of high hope, (as I think there is) there may be in this, in the long run, its sudden execution is impossible…What then? Free them all, and keep them among us as underlings? Is it quite certain that this betters their condition? I think I would not hold one in slavery, at any rate; yet the point is not clear enough for me to denounce people upon. What next? Free them, and make them

> politically and socially, our equals? My own feelings will not admit of this; and if mine would, we well know that those of the great mass of white people will not."

While Lincoln was committed to the political values of the American republic, he understood that Africans were likely not to be welcomed as equal citizens with whites. Lincoln also went so far as to suggest that the extension of slavery into new territory would amount to the destruction of a free white nation (1854: 466):

> "Whether slavery shall go into Nebraska, or other new territories, is not a matter of exclusive concern to the people who may go there. The whole nation is interested that the best use shall be made of these territories. *We want them for the homes of free white people*. This they cannot be, to any considerable extent, if slavery shall be planted within them" (emphasis added).

What emerges in Lincoln's nationalism is a commitment to the political values of liberty and self-government (which are violated by slavery), but also a recognition that the American republic is still largely a white republic and that to challenge the value of equal white citizenship by advocating for equal African citizenship would be to tear asunder the already precarious relationship that existed in American politics between the Northern and Southern states. Lincoln might have been committed to freeing African slaves, but his nationalism prevented him from advocating for full equality of freed slaves.

Hamilton and Lincoln both advocated for a conception of American nationalism premised upon the political values of liberty and self-government. Both indicated that unity was all important for the functioning of the American polity. Yet Lincoln's nationalism also raised the question of who could be a member of a unified American

polity. This issue of national membership is crucial, as some theorists suggest membership is the primary social good (Walzer 1983: 64-65) in that it allows individuals to have access to a variety of other social goods they need to make choices, and live productive lives. In the early American republic, who would be allowed to be members?

The short answer is white males who owned property (Smith 1997: 198). Women, Native-Americans and Africans were excluded from the rights of citizenship.[51] For Africans the restrictions on membership were to last well into the 20th century. The basic argument to exclude them was that Africans were never a party to the social contract that had formed the American republic, nor could they actively participate in the ongoing life of the republic, given their historical circumstances of slavery and general subordination in all aspects of American life. The best example of excluding African-Americans as members of the American republic based upon the white supremacist logic discussed above can be found in the infamous Supreme Court opinion of Roger B. Taney in *Dredd Scott vs. Sandford* (1857).[52]

In Taney's ruling, the key question that was addressed before the Court was whether (1857: 92-93), "a Negro, whose ancestors were imported into this country, and sold as slaves, [can] become a member of the political community formed and brought into existence by the Constitution of the United States, and as such become entitled to all the rights, and privileges, and immunities, guaranteed by that instrument to the citizen." Taney's answer was an emphatic no and rested upon several arguments, most of which

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[51] When I speak of Africans as being excluded from citizenship, I do not mean to reduce African oppression to simply being excluded as members of a political community, for their oppression also included being denied any sense of social or economic agency. By focusing on citizenship, I mean to suggest that Africans were denied the benefits that citizenship entails, including being seen as a viable social actor who has both rights and responsibilities.

[52] See Smith 1997, Chapter 9 for a discussion of the background issues surrounding the *Dredd Scott* decision.

articulated a conception of Africans as inferior and not originally part of the American political community. As Taney indicates (1857: 93):

> "We think they [Africans] are not [members] and that they are not included, and were not intended to be included, under the word "citizens" in the Constitution…they were at that time considered as a subordinate and inferior class of beings, who had been subjugated by the dominant race, and whether emancipated or not, yet remained subject to their authority."

Taney continues this same theme by suggesting that African-Americans were purposely excluded from the American republic because (1857: 94),

> "They had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the Negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit."

Taney's opinion expressly denied Africans membership in the American political community on two grounds, both of which were linked by a white supremacist logic. First, Africans were never intended to be members of the American political community, and thus can be excluded. Secondly, Africans, due to their social position, and treatment by the larger white society were deemed unfit to be citizens or members of the American polity. Taney's opinion seemed to center on the degree to which Africans were seen as "inferior", "subordinate" and lacking in any rights that ought to be respected. Therefore, membership in the American political community was denied to Africans based upon a white supremacist narrative that painted Africans as

unequal, "inferior", and unsuited for the benefits (and responsibilities) of national citizenship. This denial of membership is crucial, for it shows the degree to which the white supremacist racial narrative influenced conceptions of what it meant to be a member of the American polity. Since Africans were perceived as "inferior" and unfit to act as citizens, how were Africans supposed to be treated by society?

This question proved to be important as American society dealt with the issue of slavery and its relationship to American political values such as individual liberty and self-government. Throughout the post-Revolutionary period and into the U.S. Civil War, it seems that Africans were to be treated in American society as "children" who, due to their inability to be full-fledged members of the American political community, ought to be protected for their own benefit.[53] This notion developed into a conception of paternalism toward Africans.

Paternalism

Following the American Revolution, the question of slavery became an ongoing source of social and political conflict in the new republic. As scholars suggest, the ongoing tensions within American political thinking concerning slavery and the political ideals of American society came into sharp conflict with one another (Frederickson 1971: 2). By the middle of the 19th century, "scientific" forms of racism developed that provided justification for the ongoing practice of African-American slavery. While the thinkers of the American Revolution, such as Thomas Jefferson, had suggested previously that Africans might be biologically or innately inferior beings (Jefferson 2004:

[53] Normally we think that children are to be developed so that they can pursue autonomous decision-making. In the case of Africans, their designation as children was meant to convey their innate irrationality, and inability to become autonomous. In modern language, Africans were considered "mentally handicapped" and therefore could not develop, nor be developed.

239), the new forms of scientific and biological racism were more insidious, being intertwined with the political ideas that were at the basis of American society.

Some thinkers used these "scientifically-based" arguments to refute African political agency by suggesting they were unfit to be given liberty and could not engage in the processes required of self-government. The work of John C. Calhoun and George Fitzhugh is instructive in this regard. Both thinkers argued that some individuals in society could not, and should not be treated as full members of society, given their inability to be viable political agents.

In the work of John C. Calhoun, the question of how to organize political communities is of utmost importance. In his *A Disquisition on Government* (1849), a central theme is how to govern a society that values individual liberty and republican self-government. Calhoun's response is to provide for suffrage and the ability of differing interests to check one another. His argument fits well with the American commitment to liberty and republican-pluralist political theory, but he also suggests that some members of society should not be given liberty or a role in self-government (1849: 400):

> "It is a great and dangerous error to suppose that all people are equally entitled to liberty. It is a reward to be earned, not a blessing to be gratuitously lavished on all alike; - a reward reserved for the intelligent, the patriotic, the virtuous and deserving; - and not a boon to be bestowed on a people too ignorant, degraded and vicious to be capable of either appreciating or enjoying it."

Those who can enjoy liberty are those who have the requisite capacities to use it.

Calhoun seems to suggest that there are some individuals or groups of people who are undeserving of liberty, primarily because of their status in society. While he does not specifically identify Africans by name, Calhoun during was a slave-state advocate (Hollinger and Capper 1997: 393). Insofar as he understood slavery to be beneficial, his ideas regarding the rejection of liberty for some groups informs his understanding that some individuals cannot use liberty effectively and to grant them such liberty would be, as he indicates, dangerous in the sense of upending the social order. Calhoun pushes the argument even further (1849: 401):

> "This dispensation seems to be the result of some fixed law; - and every effort to disturb or defeat it, by attempting to elevate a people in the scale of liberty, above the point to which they are entitled to rise, must ever prove abortive, and end in disappointment. The progress of a people rising from a lower to a higher point in the scale of liberty, is necessarily slow; - and by attempting to precipitate, we either retard, or permanently defeat it."

The inferiority of some people, most notably Africans, is based upon a "fixed" law that cannot be changed by human action. Therefore, no amount of trying to elevate such inferior people will work; only time will allow for the acquisition of liberty by those who don't currently possess it.[54] Society is organized by differences in status that are linked to the possession of liberty. To the degree that Calhoun suggests these differences are "fixed", those who lack liberty must submit to those who possess it, not only for society's benefit, but also for those who still seek to be free. Indeed, Calhoun further suggests that society is prior to the individual in the sense that a human being is born into

[54] While it might seem that Calhoun's argument here is inconsistent, Calhoun is disavowing any need to help those who are the bottom of the social hierarchy. If changes in the hierarchy of society are to occur, they will come about through processes unrelated to human action.

a particular form of political community, and thus, men "are born subject, not only to parental authority, but to the laws and institutions of the country where [they] are born, and under whose protection they draw their first breath" (1849: 402). Society is hierarchically organized, and only some have the requisite abilities to gain and retain freedom. Those who are at the bottom of the hierarchy, and those who lack liberty, must rely upon others in society to make choices. This is so because of the need to establish social order to generate the proper distribution of political power.

George Fitzhugh's work emphasizes the same paternalistic themes found in Calhoun's work. In his work, Fitzhugh begins with a critique of northern liberal economics, especially the idea of free competition. He suggests that open and free economic competition is a disaster, primarily because of the values implied in such a commitment, especially the stress on "unadulterated selfishness" and the constant struggle between those who own capital and those who only can sell their labor (1854: 418). Fitzhugh argues that the capitalist is able to control and dominate the laborer, a feature of liberal free-market capitalism that Fitzhugh harshly criticizes (1854: 419):

> "A beautiful system of ethics this, that places all mankind in antagonistic positions, and puts all society at war. What can such a war result in but the oppression and ultimate extermination of the weak? In such society the astute capitalist, who is very skilful and cunning, gets the advantage of every one with whom he competes or deals…but the mass of the simple and poor are outwitted and cheated by everybody…Thus does free competition, the creature of free society, throw the whole burden of the social fabric on the poor, the weak and

> ignorant. They produce everything and enjoy nothing. They are 'the muzzled ox that treadeth out the straw.'"

Free-market capitalism (best exemplified by a commitment to competition) puts the weak and ignorant at a disadvantage because they lack the ability to be competitive with others. Therefore, the logic that underlies free competition is problematic on two fronts. First, it promotes a sense of individualism, self-egoism and a general separation of man from one another. Secondly, it creates a disassociation between labor and capital. For Fitzhugh, society is prior to the individual and thus provides the individual with a sense of place. To the degree that this model of society is valuable, the association of capital and labor can occur. Insofar as these two elements intersect, the poor and the weak in society can be taken care of. Fitzhugh argues that liberal free-market competition leads to the destruction of the poor as well as Africans (1854: 420-421):

> "The disassociation of labor and disintegration of society, which liberty and free competition occasion, is especially injurious to the poorer class; for besides the labor necessary to support the family, the poor man is burdened with the care of finding a home, and procuring employment, and attending to all domestic wants and concerns. Slavery relieves our slaves of these cares altogether, and slavery is a form, and the very best form, of socialism. In fact, the ordinary wages of common labor are insufficient to keep up separate domestic establishments for each of the poor, and association or starvation is in many cases inevitable. In free society…this is the accepted theory, and various schemes have been resorted to, all without success, to cure the evil. The association of labor properly carried out

> under a common head or ruler, would render labor more efficient, relieve the laborer of many of the cares of household affairs, and protect and support him in sickness and old age, besides preventing the too great reduction of wages by redundancy of labor and free competition. Slavery attains all of these results. What else will?"

For Fitzhugh, liberal free-market capitalism and competition undercuts the poor and Africans by forcing them to compete against those with more power, resources and abilities to be successful in the marketplace. Fitzhugh argues that a social system (e.g. slavery) that protects certain segments of the population (e.g. Africans in the American south) is beneficial to those that it protects. While this conception of "protection" suggests that Fitzhugh might be concerned about the prospects of Africans in market competition, his real argument is that Africans can't compete with others (especially whites) and therefore need the resources of masters to survive. Africans are "children" who need the control exercised by a master (1854: 423):

> "Children cannot be governed by mere law; first because they do not understand it, and secondly, because they are so much under the influence of impulse, passion and appetite, that they want sufficient self-control to be deterred or governed by the distant and doubtful penalties of the law. They must be constantly controlled by parents or guardians, whose will and orders shall stand in the place of law for them…[The Negro] is but a grown up child, and must be governed as a child, not as a lunatic or criminal. The master occupies towards him the place of parent or guardian."

Fitzhugh sees the master-slave relationship as one mirroring the parent-

child relationship. The master "cares" for slave, and tries to protect the slave from falling prey to their appetites and lack of self-control. He claims that in the absence of the master, slaves would become a burden on society (given their lack of resources and child-like mental capacities), and it is therefore in the interests of both slave and society to retain the social practice of domestic slavery (Fitzhugh 1854: 423). Fitzhugh also argues that Africans are "inferior" when compared to the white race and therefore would be "exterminated" if subjected to the whims of free-market competition (1854: 423). Fitzhugh maintains that the master is the slave's friend and has his best interests at heart. Slavery exists to benefit not only the master, but also the slave, since it creates a sense of duty on the part of the master to the slave and vice-versa. Finally, Fitzhugh suggests that African slavery also provides for republican self-government in the American south by enabling whites to engage in those activities required of publicly-engaged citizens (Fitzhugh 1854: 425). Fitzhugh thereby provides another source of legitimacy for slavery: it enables whites to achieve the republican ideals of the American political community.

The work of John C. Calhoun and George Fitzhugh emphasizes that Africans, given their "inferiority" (and all this inferiority entails) do not require freedom, but "care". Their paternalistic arguments suggest that African-Americans need to be controlled so as to facilitate the proper development of social order founded on white dominance. Both Calhoun and Fitzhugh emphasize the "fixed" nature of African subservience, and take this as a given in trying to lay out the role of Africans in American society. While their arguments seem to suggest a desire to "better" African-Americans, the real consequence of their "humanitarian" paternalism is to denigrate Africans and

restrict their ability to be free, self-governing agents. Their arguments also imply that white dominance and control is a necessary pre-requisite for the functioning of American society and for the "protection" of Africans.

Given the wide variety of themes developed thus far, it is now time to link them together, with a goal of showing how the white supremacist narrative informed American conceptions of liberty, self-government, nationalism and paternalism. My central argument is that in the absence of the white supremacist narrative, the contradictions that exist between liberty, self-government, nationalism and paternalism could not be solved, and that the white supremacist narrative is therefore the crucial link between these ideas and provides a sense of coherence to them, and to American political institutions and social practices built upon them.

Critical Appraisal: Linking White Supremacy, Liberty, Self-Government, Nationalism and Paternalism

The linking of the various themes developed thus far is not an easy task. Indeed, it would seem that some of these themes cannot be linked due to their contradictory assumptions. For example, an emphasis on liberty and self-government contradicts a conception of paternalism primarily because liberty and self-government advocate for individuals to make their own choices free from the control of others. American nationalism, while linked to liberty and self-government, also seems to conflict with paternalism, since to have a unified federal polity seems to require recognition of the independence and control of the polity's constituent parts.

How then can these four themes be linked together coherently? The best way to do so is by realizing the degree to which the white supremacist racial narrative informs

and links all of these themes together. A conception of Africans as "inferior", "beast-like" and sub-human helped to solidify a conception of white American nationalism based upon the need to take care of Africans given their social status and mental capacities. The white supremacist narrative links nationalism and paternalism by its ability to provide the logical basis for the formation of a white unified republic that needed to be wary of the child-like activities and impulsivity of Africans. The white supremacist racial narrative links nationalism and paternalism by suggesting that a unified American polity cannot be based upon an acceptance of African political, social and economic equality, given the inability of Africans to be able to use their equal status in a responsible way. The linkage between American nationalism and paternalism is facilitated by the underlying white supremacist narrative that informed white American understandings regarding the capacity Africans to be viable political agents. It is less clear is how liberty and self-government are informed by the white supremacist racial narrative. Indeed, it would seem that these themes are in direct contradiction to the white supremacist racial narrative insofar as this narrative seeks to provide a basis for the inequality of Africans, and for having them relegated to an inferior status in the American polity.

How is it that liberty and self-government are informed by the white supremacist narrative? A commitment to liberty and self-government relies upon an underlying model of human agency. To be able to be free and engaged in collective decision-making, individuals are assumed to have certain traits:

1) They are minimally rational in the sense that they have their own interests, and can use resources to pursue those interests,

2) They are able to acquire information and use it to weigh decisions regarding collective political outcomes and,
3) They are able to use (1) and (2) to make decisions about the course not only of their own individual lives, but the collective activities of a political community.

The white supremacist racial narrative claims that Africans do not approximate this underlying model of human agency. Therefore, Africans can be denied liberty and the ability to participate in self-government primarily because they are perceived as sub-human and lacking the minimal requirements needed to be considered a viable political agent. This claim is crucial for it explains how a society such as the U.S., purportedly built upon the political values of liberty and self-government, could deny Africans freedom and the ability to be engaged in collective decision-making: the political values of liberty and self-government only apply to those individuals who are seen as having the requisite capacities and abilities to use their freedom and access to political decision-making wisely. Insofar as Africans were perceived in American society to be "inferior", they were seen not as viable political agents and, therefore, could be excluded from the American political community.[55]

The white supremacist narrative allowed for the domination, marginalization and oppression of Africans despite the principled commitment of American society to liberty and self-government. It also provided the justification for African exclusion while

[55] While it is likely that some *did* want to help Africans develop, it is important to note that even conceptions of "development" presuppose a particular model of what it means to "develop" and the model proposed here of what it means to be a viable political agent *is presumed to be* the model that all must conform to in order to be "good citizens". Even a political theorist like J.S. Mill who was committed to individual freedom and self-development still *presumed* that individuals had to conform to a particular model of development to be *viable* agents (Goldberg 2002). To presume what it means to be "developed" neglects the deeper question of what an emphasis on "development" means, and whether such an emphasis represents a Western conception of human agency.

allowing the political values of liberty and self-government to remain meaningful as a basis for American political life. In this construction, there is no problem in retaining a commitment to liberty and self-government on the one hand, and denying these to Africans on the other: *African-Americans are <u>not</u> viable agents, and since being free and engaged in collective decision-making requires being a viable agent*, there is no contradiction between the political values of American society and its treatment of Africans. In the absence of a white supremacist racial narrative that denied African agency, the inability of Africans to be free and engaged in collective decision-making would constitute a deep conflict at the very core of the American political community, since there would be no way to justify the social, political and economic inequality of Africans. The contradiction in American society between a commitment to liberty and self-government and the denial that these values applied to Africans was rationalized by reference to the underlying white supremacist racial narrative that existed from the very earliest development of the American political community and informed the functioning of American society up until the U.S. Civil War.[56]

Once this racialist construction is understood, the link between the four themes described throughout this chapter becomes much clearer. The American political community was based upon a commitment to liberty and self-government, but in order for these political values to serve as a basis for a unified polity, Africans would need to be either: 1) enslaved, or 2) barring enslavement, relegated to an inferior status and "protected", given their inability to exist as free, independent agents who could be

[56] This is not to suggest that a deep contradiction between American political values and the treatment of Africans did not exist in the early history of the American republic. Rather, the argument suggests that this contradiction was solved by interweaving American political values with a white supremacist racial narrative.

involved in the workings of popular government. The integration of liberty, self-government, nationalism and paternalism would not have worked in the absence of an underlying white supremacist racial narrative that provided the logical bases for African exclusion. In the absence of the white supremacist racial narrative, the exclusion of Africans would have been difficult, if not impossible to pursue, since there would be no argument that could be used to justify such exclusionary practices towards Africans.[57]

The white supremacist racial narrative has the ability to explain several facets of American racial politics between whites and Africans from the earliest foundations of the American political community through the U.S. Civil War. First, it explains why Africans were treated as inferior beings, not deserving of liberty or the ability to be politically active citizens. Second, it explains how American commitments to such values as liberty and self-government could co-exist with social, political and economic practices that denied the applicability of such values to Africans. Third, it explains the paternalistic attitudes of some whites towards Africans, and the denial of African-Americans as members of the American political community. Finally, it can also explain how liberty, self-government, nationalism and paternalism were linked together throughout the early stages of American history.

African-Americans and the Beginnings of the Egalitarian-Transformative Narrative

Thus far the argument has focused mainly upon the development of the white supremacist narrative, but little has been said about the African response to this white

[57] One explanation could be advanced: American political values such as individual liberty and self-government are *intrinsically* racist and racialized, thereby negating the explanatory role of the white supremacist narrative. This argument has not been pursued because, as will be shown in the discussion concerning African responses to their subordination, even Africans saw value in these political values. Of course, one could argue that Africans were socialized to believe in these values (and to ignore others), but that argument would have to contend with the role that nationalism and self-help play in African political thought as (potential) alternative values to more "mainstream" American political norms.

supremacist narrative. During the late 18th century through the mid 19th Century, African-Americans[58] were able to organize what has been termed counter-publics and public intellectuals to develop an alternative racial narrative that, although embryonic at the time, would be influential in changing the landscape of American racial politics: the egalitarian-transformative narrative.

To understand African-American political thought and behavior, we must begin with the role of slavery as a system of oppression that denied their freedom. In so doing, it created a logical tension in American political ideas: how could a society which suggested its institutions were based on freedom deny freedom to African-Americans? African-American political thought and behavior can be understood (in part) as a way to answer this most fundamental question. Some African-Americans stressed the degree to which the values of freedom and equality, so important to the American political system, ought to apply to African-Americans; American society should treat African-Americans as fully co-equal citizens given their humanity, and their desire for freedom. Other African-Americans emphasized themes of nationalism, while still others stressed self-help and deeply held religious values. African-American conceptions of self were bound to the practice of slavery in the sense that to be an African-American meant having shared a history of oppression, marginalization and dominance, but also a shared narrative emphasizing the degree to which African-Americans ought to be free, to have their own institutions, and develop their communities. Up to the U.S. Civil War, African-Americans cultivated the development of an alternative racial narrative, one that stressed the value and equal citizenship of African-Americans. The development of this

[58] I have changed terms to connote the perceived change in status on the part of Africans as members of the American political community following emancipation in 1863.

alternative racial narrative helped to mobilize African-American political participation and to build African-American social and political organizations.

African-Americans in Post-Revolutionary America

African-Americans existed as free persons as well as slaves in the late 18th and early to mid 19th century. In the north and south, African-Americans were represented by free African communities (Marable and Mullings 1999: xviii-xix; Barker et. al. 1999: 14-15), but in the South the vast majority were slaves. The intersection of these two communities is, to a very large degree, how African-Americans began to generate an alternative racial narrative.[59] This intersection is my central focus: how were African-Americans able to integrate insights into their political and social thought and behavior from both communities?

During the post-revolutionary period, free African-Americans in the North did have the right to vote (Jordan 1977: 412), and they had participated in the Revolutionary Army and the Union Army during the U.S. Civil War (Jordan 1977: 302). Free Africans in the North enjoyed some ability to own property as well as to become educated (Smith 1997: 105-6). By at least the late 18th century, many states in the North abolished slavery, or provided for the gradual emancipation of slaves, which provided a fertile ground in which African-Americans could build organizations, and develop their political, social and cultural thought (Marable and Mullings 1999). Yet, even free African-Americans suffered limitations imposed on their choices, as local communities and states enacted black codes and other forms of restricting African-American political power and social mobility (Barker et. al. 1999: 14). Thus, both enslaved and free African-Americans had a

[59] While the two communities did have different experiences in American society, both shared similar experiences in terms of racial inequality and discrimination. It is this shared set of experiences that links them together, and provides a basis for an emerging counter-narrative.

shared experience of domination, oppression and marginalization which informed African-American responses to these restrictions.

Despite restrictions placed even on free African-Americans, a counterpublic informed by the experiences of both free and enslaved African-Americans forged its own form of political and social thought. This counterpublic was where political ideas about African-American equality and the contradictions of American political thought and institutions could be discussed and re-articulated to argue that African-Americans were deserving of equal citizenship, although what the term equal citizenship meant was contested by various voices within the newly emerging African-American counterpublic.

African-American Political Ideals

African-Americans were faced with several important questions, including: 1) their relationship to wider white American political institutions and ideas, and 2) how African-Americans as a group could create their own institutions and social practices to facilitate the development of African-American political, social and cultural life. Some, most notably Frederick Douglass, argued that Africans were indeed citizens, and ought to be treated so by law. Others, such as Henry Highland Garnett and Martin Delaney argued for a sense of African-American self-pride and nationalism. Finally, religious arguments pertaining to African-American equality were also present. These different themes in African-American social, political and religious thought generated a conceptual basis for the development of African-American political mobilization through such institutions as churches. These ideas also provided an alternate conception of what it meant to be African-American in the new American republic, challenging the white supremacist narrative by highlighting the contradictions found within that narrative.

How did African-Americans do this? They re-interpreted values found in American political thought through a focus on at least four key and interrelated values: freedom, self-help, nationalism, and religious egalitarianism. It is useful to look at the four values in some detail on their own, and then show how they fit together.

Freedom

For African-Americans, and most especially Frederick Douglass, freedom was the key American value that applied to white-African-American relations in American society. In his *What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?* (1852), Douglass engages in a critique of American independence as celebrated on the 4th of July (1852: 88):

> "*Fellow Citizens*: Pardon me, and allow me to ask, why am I called upon to speak here today? What have I or those I represent to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us?"

Douglass asks the critical question of how African-Americans are to relate to the values of American independence especially when they have not been applied to African-Americans. He argues that the values of American independence, especially freedom, do apply to African-Americans primarily on two grounds: a) African-Americans are "men" and b) because they are "men" they deserve the liberties associated with being such (Douglass 1852: 88-89). To be free depends upon one's humanity; all people deserve (and are entitled to) the capacity to be free in the sense of being co-equal citizens (Douglass 1852: 88). In the conception of freedom developed by Douglass, African-Americans are political agents who require the same liberties as whites to engage in political activity (Dawson 2001: 16). But Douglass's conception of freedom moves

beyond the purely negative conception found in the works of Locke and Hobbes. In his work, the idea of positive liberty finds some ground in the sense that having liberties granted to equal citizens further requires the ability of African-Americans to use them (Douglass 1852: 88).[60]

Douglass's conception of liberty seems to affirm the traditional understanding of liberty, at least in American political thought, to mean absence of restraint. But, Douglass also argues for the ability to be able to use those liberties granted to citizens, thus his harsh critique of American slavery which not only imposes bondage on human beings, but robs them of their ability to use those liberties that they have been given as human beings. Douglass is arguing that African-Americans are indeed political agents, and that they have the relevant capacities to be free and to engage in collective decision-making. For Douglass, freedom is a concept that includes freedom from restraint and tyranny, but also the ability to use the freedoms one has by virtue of one's humanity. It is a dynamic conception, because it focuses upon the ability of human beings to make choices in their own lives while it affirms a conception of equal opportunity that allows no one group to have preference over any other (Douglass 1857: 109).[61] African-Americans are "men", and thus have the rights afforded to "men", including freedom from external restraint, and the capacity to make choices. To the degree that making choices relies upon one's skills and values, his work also implies the question of how

[60] For a description of "positive" vs. "negative" liberty, see Berlin 1958. Essentially, positive freedom is the ability to use one's freedoms. Constraints, such as social, political and economic inequality makes it difficult to use one's freedoms despite having them. Douglass is arguing that African-Americans need resources in order to use their freedoms – to have education, to have access to economic means and so forth. The important point is that simply having freedom is not enough; individuals need the resources to make viable their use.

[61] Douglass' conception of freedom also seems to imply an understanding of human equality. It would seem that for Douglass, human equality is based upon a common set of life experiences that all "men" face, and the fact that all men, by virtue of these shared experiences, can come to recognize that all deserve the chance to pursue their own life goals, beliefs and interests. See Douglass 1852: 89-90.

African-Americans would develop their skills and capacities to make personal and collective choices.

Self-Help and Nationalism

Self-Help

Some African American writers approached the question of developing skills and capacities by emphasizing the degree to which African-Americans would need to deal with white prejudice and subordination by being self-sufficient and engaging in self-development (Delany 1852: 71). If African-Americans had the ability to effect a change in their situation, it had to be from their own hard work. As John S. Rock (1858: 113) argued, African-Americans had help themselves by being engaged in their own "elevation"; to be able to work, and to be engaged in the process of self-creation through the development of skills that would enable them to be independent and self-supporting. A commitment to self-help revolves around the degree to which African-Americans would engage in the task of building themselves up, but only through their own perseverance and hard work. African-Americans needed to be independent, which implied developing marketable skills as well as emphasizing the ways that such skills could be developed, especially though education (Rock 1858: 113).

The idea of self-help further implied that African-Americans had the willingness, power and ability to make choices; it was an idea marked by a strong desire to empower African-Americans by emphasizing their ability to be self-governing human beings. To the degree that African-Americans could provide for themselves, they had the capacity to make their own choices about the direction of their lives, as opposed to being dependent upon others for what they wanted and needed (Delany 1852: 84-85). The emphasis was

on two conceptually important elements: 1) that African-Americans had to work for what they wanted, and 2) African-Americans had the ability (and desire) to work hard to achieve their goals and aspirations:

> "My friends, we can never become elevated until we are true to ourselves…Let us go to work – each man in his place, determined to do what he can for himself and his race…The colored man who, by dint of perseverance and industry, educates and elevates himself, prepares the way for others, gives character to the race, and hastens the day of general emancipation" (Rock 1858: 113).

An emphasis on self-help provided a powerful mechanism for developing and then reinforcing African-American social and political agency primarily by suggesting that Africans were viable, moral agents whose ability to make choices mattered for being able to "elevate" the African-American community (Rock 1858: 114).

An interesting question was raised by an emphasis on self-help: if African-Americans had the ability to make choices, including collective choices for their community, how was that community unique and valuable? Two important responses to this question arose: one was the development of African-American nationalist thinking, and the other was in the role of religious belief in helping African-Americans to understand their current plight, and in developing mechanisms for changing that plight.

<u>African-American Nationalism</u>

One of the best examples of early African-American nationalism can be found in the work of Martin R. Delany. In his *A Black Nationalist Manifesto* (1852), he provided a conceptual argument for the idea that African-Americans were a unique and valuable "people" who needed to develop institutions that would lift them out of their misery.

Delany emphasized the degree to which African-Americans formed a collective unit with aspirations that were being trampled in the U.S. African-Americans were, to a large degree, a nation in the sense that they had interests in common with one another, they had shared life experiences, and they had shared common goals, namely self-independence and freedom (1852: 74-75).

Delany argued that African-Americans should leave the U.S. and create their own country, or integrate into the countries of South and Central America. African-Americans as a nation with a shared sense of "peoplehood" should endeavor to create their own institutions in a context where they were not confined, restricted or discriminated against by whites. This concept of a nation created a way to collectivize the difficulties African-Americans struggled with as free persons, but especially as slaves. Much like the self-help concept, it helped to foster a sense of empowerment for African-Americans. They were a unique "people" who could create their own institutions that would facilitate the development of cultural, social and political practices designed to enable them to make choices about both their individual and collective lives (Delany 1852: 79).

Religious Egalitarianism

The African-American Church

One element in this examination is still missing: the role of religious beliefs. One of the most important components of the African-American counterpublic was the church (Dawson 2001). Religious values were an important part of the African-American response to slavery, and they informed how African-Americans approached the concept

of being free. For African-Americans, an emphasis on a just God and the universalism of mankind enabled them to foresee that slavery would end, and they would be free.

The church enabled African-Americans to develop shared norms and values based upon a belief in a God who created them equally with whites so that African-Americans were entitled to the rights that came from being God's creation (Walker 1830: 25; Lincoln and Mamiya 1990: 4-5). The African-American church began as an "invisible institution" during the early days of African slavery in the South. [62] From its beginnings, the African-American Church provided a context in which Africans could discuss with one another, and deal with the on-going struggle of daily life under slavery. The African-American church also allowed African-Americans to share information and to build organizational skills (Wald 1997: 306). Because of formal restrictions on African-Americans congregating with one another, most of the early churches were simply groups of African slaves who came together to worship, and such services were mainly compromised of reading Bible stories and singing spirituals that gave Africans hope of freedom and release from their current bondage (Ahlstrom 1975: 155-156). By the beginning of the U.S. Civil War, white masters in the South began to realize that allowing African-Americans to seek religion could pacify them, so masters subsequently encouraged African-Americans to develop and cultivate religious beliefs and practices.

After emancipation, African-Americans in the South and the North began to build formal church organizations (Ahlstrom 1975: 160). These organizations were mainly Baptist, but the numbers of African-Americans who formally joined these organizations was huge. By the late 1860s, almost 2.7 million African-Americans joined formal

[62] This term is meant to suggest that Africans had to worship in secret before they were emancipated in the late 1800s.

churches devoted specifically to African-American congregants (Ahlstrom 1975: 149). The value of the African-American churches derived from their being the sole institution that was devoted to the needs, aspirations and desires of African-Americans. As two scholars of the African-American church note:

> "The Black Church has no challenger as the cultural womb of the black community. Not only did it give birth do new institutions such as schools, banks, insurance companies, and low income housing, it also provided an academy and an arena for political activities, and it nurtured young talent for musical, dramatic, and artistic development…Much of black culture is heavily indebted to the black religious tradition, including most forms of black music, drama, and literature" (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990: 8-9).

The African-American church also became a mechanism for (some) solidarity with sympathetic whites who were committed to seeing African-Americans treated equally in U.S. society and by its institutions. The long tradition in the U.S of religiously-based abolitionism was linked to African-American religious beliefs about a just God, providing a context in which whites and African-Americans could work together to build and sustain the African-American community (Walton Jr. and Smith 2008: 88-92). For example, two famous African-American spirituals, *Go Down Moses* and *Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel* show the degree to which religious values were ultimately linked to a conception of African-Americans as a "people", and the need to be free from slavery, subordination and discrimination.

Go Down Moses, utilizes a biblical theme of deliverance, but the key theme that is repeated over and over again is "let my people go" (Marable and Mullings 1999: 114-

115). The religious symbolism of deliverance is wedded to a political conception of African-Americans as a people who have the ability to make their own collective choices. The reference in the spiritual to "old Pharaoh" seems to be both a direct assault on white control, but also, on the larger system of slavery and the values upon which it was built, such as control, despotism and tyranny.

The other spiritual, *Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel*, seeks to show that God is the embodiment of justice. It does so by arguing that if God delivered Daniel from all of his trials and tribulations, than surely God, who is just, would deliver "every man" (115). Because God was just and helped those who suffered from problems, he would help all of his children who were suffering. In this context, "Daniel" seems to stand for those who are seen as valuable, and worthy of God's grace. The song implies that if "Daniel" is worthy to be helped by God, than especially those who are oppressed would be given divine forms of justice in the problematic context of African-American slavery.

All told, the religious values of African-Americans not only helped to solidify a conception of African-Americans as a "people", but they also provided the foundation for a major African-American social and political institution throughout American history: the African-American church. To the degree that the religious values pursued by African-Americans matched with the religiously-based white abolition movement, African-Americans were able to create coalitions with sympathetic whites to achieve their collective goals. Religion served as a means for empowering African-Americans while at the same time providing a justification for why slavery had to end.

Freedom, Self-Help, Nationalism and Religion: An Alternative Racial Narrative?

The main emphasis throughout the argument thus far concerning African-American political thought and behavior is that African-Americans in the late 18th and through the mid 19th centuries helped to generate an alternative racial narrative, the egalitarian-transformative narrative. This is so because of the interrelationships that existed between the key motivating ideas and arguments at the base of African-American thought and behavior. To understand how African-Americans generated this new racial narrative, we have to see how freedom, self-help, nationalism and religious values are connected.

They can be connected in the following way: if God is just, and creates beings designed for liberty, then they should have the skills and capacities for exercising those liberties, in a context that emphasizes citizen equality. The interrelationship is important because it confronts the logical problem that occurs in American society around the conflict between a political system committed to liberty that practices slavery. African-American political thought argued that the social, political and economic inequalities between whites and Africans were patently unjust and ultimately violated American political values. The question therefore became how to deal with this contradiction.

African-Americans responded by generating the beginning of an alternative racial narrative that stressed the degree to which such political values as freedom and equality could be applied to African-Americans in American society. They were able to do so because the dominant white supremacist narrative contained logical problems and fallacies that could be exploited to show the obvious tensions built into American society

concerning white and African-American social, political and economic relationships.[63] African-American political and social thought showed that the long dominant acceptance of white supremacy was based upon a faulty logic that denied political agency to a group of persons who in fact did have agency. The criticism made by African-Americans, and the development of their own cultural, political and social institutions, amounted to the (embryonic) development of a broader African-American counterpublic whose public intellectuals could discuss and generate the needed criticisms of American society to empower African-Americans to generate their own institutions and social practices.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to show the development of the dominant white supremacist racial narrative from the beginning of American politics until 1865. The argument has sought to show how the problem of color difference and the justifications used by whites to buttress their own power and control revealed deep contradictions in American society concerning the fundamental political values of its creation: liberty and the need for self-government. The development of African chattel slavery throughout the English colonies and then into the new American Republic seemed to violate the basic principles of human liberty and republicanism. Throughout America's earliest years a white supremacist racial narrative developed that provided a logical basis for African-American exclusion. This narrative rested upon assumptions that African-Americans were inferior and therefore, they did not deserve liberty or self-government. The white racial narrative included questions of national membership, what it meant for America to be a nation, and how African-Americans would be treated in the

[63] While the four themes tend to emphasize African-American life experiences and goals, they also re-configure white and African-American relations so that African-Americans could better understand how to adapt to white American society, but also create their own institutions and values within that society.

American political community. At the end of the U.S. Civil War, slavery had been abolished, but the deeper problem of white and African-American differences was not resolved. As the U.S. emerged from the Civil War, new questions had to be confronted: if slavery was gone, what was going to be the impact on African-American and white relations? What would be the role for African-Americans in a society that in the mid 1860s was largely committed to a notion of white supremacy? We now turn to an examination of the complex patterns of racial group relations between whites and African-Americans following the abolition of slavery from the mid-1860s to the mid 1960s.

Chapter 4: The Rise of the Egalitarian-Transformative Narrative: 1865-1965

The purpose of the following chapter is to detail the emergence of an egalitarian-transformative racial narrative in American politics, and its effects on African-American political behavior. It shows that despite the ongoing power of white supremacy in American political institutions and social life, African-Americans developed dense social networks based upon a counter-narrative that stressed the maltreatment of African-Americans in American social, political and economic life. The central focus of the chapter is explicating the new racial narrative that was developed by African-Americans and its conceptual foundations. It will be argued that the egalitarian-transformative racial narrative developed by African-Americans emphasized the liberation of African-Americans from the oppressive conditions of segregation that emerged in American society from the end of Reconstruction up until the mid-20th Century. This narrative, as elaborated by African-American elites, was not monolithic, and African-Americans debated the processes that would facilitate African-American liberation. The egalitarian-transformative racial narrative provided a conceptual foundation for African-American liberation and the development of organizations which sought to pursue racial liberation. The conceptual and organizational foundations laid by African-Americans from the late 19th Century through the mid 20th Century allowed African-Americans to not only criticize and show the contradictions in mainstream American society, but to help create wide-ranging institutional reforms in American society, culminating in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. While it is the case that white supremacy existed in American society throughout the 1865-1965 period, the chapter argues that the emergence and development of the egalitarian-transformative racial

narrative helps to explain the revolutionary changes in American racial relations that occurred in this period of American history.

What is an "Egalitarian-Transformative" Racial Narrative?

As discussed in chapter 1, an egalitarian-transformative racial narrative is composed of several characteristics. The defining characteristics of the egalitarian-transformative narrative include:

1. Challenging of dominant racial intergroup relations that are buttressed and given force through essentialized racial identities.
2. Generating a set of prescriptive and normative concepts, such as equal worth, dignity and fairness that disrupt the power of the dominant racial intergroup relationship.
3. Giving those who are subordinated impetus to develop organizations that foster mobilization and the generation of resources to counter-act the dominant racial group's power over political institutions, social practices and "common sense" norms that constitute social relations.

The conceptual foundations of an egalitarian-transformative racial narrative indicate that subordinated groups in society are able to transform racial intergroup relations through the elaboration of concepts that challenge and ultimately undermine the dominance of certain groups in society. In order for subordinated groups to challenge the dominance of certain racial groups in society, there also needs to be the development of organizations and institutions. These help in the elaboration and articulation of the new racial narrative, and provide the basis for mobilizing agents to engage in political activities that can disrupt and contest the subordination of certain racial groups.

Because of the theoretical components entailed in an egalitarian-transformative narrative, it is important to show how certain racial groups in society are subordinated, and their responses to such subordination. In order to accomplish these tasks, it is useful to inquire into the status of African-Americans in American society following the end of the U.S. Civil War. The discussion focuses first on Reconstruction, and then moves to a discussion of racial segregation in American society. In both cases, African-Americans were ultimately denied their political agency, and African-American elites responded by challenging the "common sense" racial norms and practices found in post-Civil War American society.

Reconstruction: 1865-1870

After the end of the U.S. Civil War in 1865, a key question permeated American politics: how were the defeated Southern states to be brought back into the union? As suggested by President Abraham Lincoln in his *A Righteous and Speedy Peace* (1865), the central problem was not whether the Southern states, through their secession, had lost any semblance of relation to the Northern states (1865: 6):

> "We all agree that the seceded States, so called, are out of their proper practical relation with the Union; and that the sole object of the government, civil and military, in regard to those States is to again get them into that proper practical relation."

The problem was how to accomplish what Lincoln desired. For Lincoln, the best strategy was to pursue a policy of reconstruction that was not vindictive to the southern states, but allowed for the South to re-enter the union while protecting against any future Southern rebellion. In order to accomplish this, Lincoln advocated for a 10% plan. The

essential idea was to allow Southern states readmission to the union so long as 10% of qualified voters (as of 1860) in the Southern states swore a loyalty to the union and would accept the antislavery measures of the federal government including the Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution forbidding slavery.

After Lincoln's assassination, his successor, Andrew Johnson, essentially pursued the same policy as Lincoln. As Johnson stated in his first message to Congress in 1865, reconstruction was needed, and the South had to ban slavery as a means to reconcile the North and the South (1865: 10):

> "It is not too much to ask, in the name of the whole people, that on the one side the plan of restoration shall proceed in conformity to cast the disorders of the past into oblivion, and that on the other the evidence of sincerity in the future maintenance of the Union shall be put beyond any doubt by the ratification of the proposed amendment to the Constitution, which provides for the abolition of slavery forever within the limits of our country. So long as the adoption of this amendment is delayed, so long will doubt and jealousy and uncertainty prevail…Until it is done [ratification of the 13th Amendment] the past, however much we may desire it, will not be forgotten. The adoption of the amendment reunites us beyond all power of disruption; it heals the wound that is still imperfectly closed; it removes slavery, the element which has so long perplexed and divided the country; it makes of us once more a united people, renewed and strengthened, bound more than ever to mutual affection and support."

For Johnson, once the Southern states ratified the 13th Amendment and submitted to the loyalty oath, they ought to be welcomed back into the union. The ratification of

the 13th Amendment posed difficulties for Johnson, particularly in reference to how freed slaves would be treated by Southern governments. As Johnson indicated, he was uncomfortable in using executive power to force the Southern states to recognize the civic equality of newly freed slaves, and he suggested that states, not the federal government, ought to develop policies regarding the presence of the newly freed slaves in Southern states. For Johnson, the question of whether or not newly freed African-American slaves could vote was paramount. As he stated (1865: 12):

> "Every danger of conflict is avoided when the settlement of the question is referred to the several States. They can, each for itself, decide on the measure and whether it is to be adopted at once and absolutely or introduced gradually and with conditions. In my judgment the freedmen, if they show patience and manly virtues, will sooner obtain a participation in the elective franchise through the States than through the General Government, even if it had power to intervene. When the tumult of emotions that have been raised by the suddenness of the social change shall have subsided, it may prove that they will receive the kindest usage from some of those on whom they have heretofore most closely depended."

The question of whether freed African-American slaves could vote would be discussed and (partially) resolved through the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution passed in 1868, Johnson's attitude toward Reconstruction emphasized minimal requirements for Southern states to be re-admitted to the union. The minimal requirements of executive-led Reconstruction prompted a backlash by Congressional Republicans, who sought stronger requirements for Southern re-admittance to the union.

For example, Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts argued that these requirements should include: the complete enfranchisement of all citizens regardless of race and the establishment of universal education programs throughout the South (Sumner 1865: 12-13). The additional requirements proposed by Sumner reflected, to a large degree, the desire of Republicans in Congress to make Southern state admittance to the union more difficult. Republicans desired stronger requirements not only to punish the South for the Civil War, but also to (partially) reconstruct Southern social and political life, particularly in regards to the treatment of freed African-American slaves.

From 1866 through 1868, Republicans in Congress were able to impose stricter requirements on the Southern states as they sought re-admittance to the union. During this period, Congress passed the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which provided for equal protection of the laws, and citizenship to freed African-Americans. The Reconstruction Act of 1867 imposed military rule on the South, and the federal government used force to make sure that freed African-American slaves had the ability to use their newly acquired right to vote (Klarman 2007: 55). The final act of Congressional Republicans, the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which barred states from denying the right to vote based upon "race, color or previous condition of servitude" was the mechanism (in addition the 14th Amendment and the Reconstruction Act) to solidify federal intervention in the South to protect the voting rights of freed African-Americans. The cumulative effect of the 14th and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution and the Reconstruction Act were to enable freed African-Americans to vote, and they did so in large numbers. As one scholar notes:

> "With their suffrage rights secured, southern blacks voted in huge numbers and helped to elect Republican state governments throughout the South. Black voters also elected large numbers of black officeholders…blacks comprised nearly half of the lower-house delegates in Mississippi and Louisiana, and a majority in South Carolina. Sixteen southern blacks served in Congress, many held state executive offices, and a black justice sat on the South Carolina Supreme Court. Thousands of blacks held local office as sheriffs, magistrates, county councilors, and school board members" (Klarman 2007: 58).

By the late 1860s and through the early 1870s, African-Americans wielded political power in the South, and through such power, were able to secure material resources for the African-American community. African-Americans were able to exercise political agency, and to be involved in governmental decision-making. The problem was that the political agency of African-Americans was dependent upon federal intervention in the South to protect their ability to vote. If the North became unable (or unwilling) to continue to intervene in the South to protect African-American political rights, there was the very real possibility of African-Americans being disenfranchised.

The End of Reconstruction: 1870-1876

Beginning in 1870, the political will of the North to continue Reconstruction waned. This lack of political will can be attributed to many sources. As Klarman (2007: 62) notes, "many Northern whites were losing their enthusiasm for Reconstruction. Some were troubled by the antidemocratic implications of sustained military rule in the South and others by the centralization of authority in the hands of the federal

government. A yearning for sectional reconciliation also induced many northern whites to abandon Reconstruction."

Beyond the growing lack of support for Reconstruction by white Northerners, Republicans in Congress also lost their hold on political power, thus enabling Democrats to block any future passage of civil rights legislation. Democrats (particularly those from the South) opposed civil rights legislation for a variety of reasons. First, a commitment to white supremacy in the South (and its elected officials) made advocating for civil rights legislation difficult to sustain. Secondly, Southern Democrats opposed federal intervention in state affairs, particularly in regards to racial policy. As Frederickson (1971: 198-208) argues, Southern Democrats resented the imposition of racial norms and values upon the Southern states by the North; they perceived such impositions as an example of an overactive federal government violating states rights. Finally, Southern Democrats also opposed civil rights legislation because the political environment allowed them to do so with minimal electoral consequences: in the South public opinion supported opposition, and in the North, public opinion was moving towards ending federal intervention in the South to secure the civil and political rights of newly freed African-Americans. The Democrats were effectively able to undermine the Republicans in the Congressional elections of 1874 by painting Republicans as pursuing "social equality" between whites and blacks via civil rights legislation. With Democrats firmly in control of Congress, and a Republican President who was unwilling to sacrifice future Republican political opportunities, Reconstruction was almost dead.

The final blow came in the contested presidential election of 1876 between Rutherford B. Hayes (Republican) and Samuel Tilden (Democrat). The election was

extremely close, and there were widespread accusations of electoral fraud in several Southern states, including Florida, Louisiana and South Carolina (Klarman 2007: 66). In order to deal with the contested election results, a commission was set up to declare who was the winner of the electoral votes in Florida, Louisiana and South Carolina. When the commission ultimately found in favor of Hayes, the Democrats cried foul and threatened to repudiate the decision of the commission. In order to avoid this, the representatives of Hayes and Tilden met. The results of this meeting resolved the disputed election; Hayes was given the presidency, and in exchange, Hayes promised to appoint a Southerner to his cabinet and remove federal troops from the South. The ultimate result of this compromise allowed Southern Democrats to regain political control of the South, and to repress African-American voting (Barker et. al. 1999: 17).

The period of Reconstruction in American history failed to change racial intergroup relations in the North and the South. While the passage of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution institutionalized a commitment to African-American legal equality, cases brought before the U.S. Supreme Court dealing with their application blunted the power of these amendments for helping African-Americans to deal with the repression they were subject to in the post-Reconstruction South (Woodward 1966: 71; Walton Jr. and Smith 2008: 30-31). By the late 1870s and then throughout the first half of the 20th Century, African-Americans in the South and North were subjected to oppression, the destruction of their political rights, and in general were treated as second-class citizens. With the failed attempt during Reconstruction to change racial intergroup relations, a new system of racial oppression emerged: racial segregation.

Segregation as a Solution to the "Negro Problem"

With the removal of federal troops from the South beginning in the mid to late 1870s, whites in the South sought to disenfranchise African-Americans, and to create a rigid system of segregation between whites and African-Americans. The system of segregation that evolved in the South and North following Reconstruction denied to African-Americans equal accommodations in a variety of public and private settings including restrooms, hotels, schools, playgrounds, beaches, parks, hospitals, libraries, restaurants, and railroad cars (Walton Jr. and Smith 2008: 23). These initial forms of exclusion would be precursors to later exclusionary practices in the 20th century, including residential segregation.[64] The point of racial segregation was to remove African-Americans from interactions with whites in a variety of settings. By removing African-Americans, the system of racial segregation that took hold especially in the 1890s was essentially a system that institutionalized African-American inferiority. Because African-Americans were denied the ability to use the same facilities as whites, their ability to become economically and socially independent was attenuated. Due to the lack of mobility on the part of African-Americans, in addition to a lack of civil rights and the *inferior* accommodations and services that African-Americans received, African-Americans – despite their being legally "free" – were relegated to an inferior status politically, culturally and economically.

Politically, segregation involved the disenfranchisement of African-Americans, especially in the South. The problem that the South faced was how to disenfranchise African-Americans without violating the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which prohibited such restrictions on African-American voting. The disenfranchisement of African-Americans was facilitated by the most insidious methods, ranging from poll

[64] See Chapter 5 for a discussion of residential segregation.

taxes and residency requirements to literacy tests (Key, Jr. 1949: 537-538). Such mechanisms were not expressly prohibited by the 15th Amendment since they did not restrict voting on the basis of color, despite the fact that such restrictions amounted to restrictions on voting based on characteristics shared by Southern African-Americans (Key Jr. 1949: 538-39). The effects of such mechanisms for disenfranchisement had a profound effect on African-American voting. As one scholar notes:

> "The effectiveness of disenfranchisement is suggested by a comparison of the number of registered Negro voters in Louisiana in 1896, when there were 130,334 and in 1904, when there were 1,342. Between the two dates the literacy, property, and poll-tax qualifications were adopted. In 1896 Negro registrants were in a majority in twenty-six parishes – by 1900 in none" (Woodward 1966: 85).

Due to the restrictions placed on African-American voting, the political power of African-Americans in the South dwindled considerably. By the late 19th Century and through the early 20th Century, African-Americans lacked political representation in many Southern state legislatures, thus making it more difficult for African-Americans to help direct public policy (Barker et. al. 1999: 17).

Culturally, African-Americans were excluded from participating in many community activities in the South and the North (Woodward 1966: 99-100). For example, in W.E.B. Du Bois focuses upon the cultural ostracism African-Americans faced in the North (1899: 494):

> "In all walks of life the Negro is liable to meet some objection to his presence or some discourteous treatment; and ties of friendship or memory seldom are strong enough to hold across the color line. If an invitation is issued to the public

> for any occasion, the Negro can never know whether he would be welcomed or not; if he goes he is liable to have his feelings hurt and get into unpleasant altercation; if he stays away, he is blamed for indifference" (494).

In the South, white vigilante groups such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) used violence to intimidate African-Americans so that they would not participate in the political and cultural life of the community. African-Americans had to know their place in the Southern racial order, and the KKK through such tactics as lynching, public burnings of African-Americans, hangings and the destruction of African-American property sought to restrain the social mobility of African-Americans.

Economically, segregation entailed that African-Americans (particularly in the South, but also the North) were relegated to menial jobs. In the South, African-Americans mainly sought work as agricultural laborers with their former white masters. African-Americans were now free laborers, but their place within the economic hierarchies of the South forced many African-Americans into a state of peonage and dependence (Bobo and Smith 1999: 203-204; McAdam 1982: 67; 87-90). As one scholar states:

> "The simple face is that most blacks who were engaged in southern agriculture during this period never attained the status of independent farm owners. The majority were either tenant farmers working a plot of land in exchange for a portion of the crop produced, or sharecroppers working as little more than hired farmhands" (McAdam 1982: 88).[65]

[65] Tenant farmers worked the land owned by their former masters, whereas sharecroppers were able to acquire property independently of their former masters, but had to relinquish much of their yearly crop to their former masters since most sharecroppers had to buy seeds and farm equipment on credit. In both cases, African-Americans were unable to be economically independent.

In the North, restrictions on African-American entrance into the industrial economy were also in place. As Du Bois relates (1899: 492-493):

> "No matter how well trained a Negro may be, or how fitted for work of any kind, he cannot in the ordinary course of competition hope to be much more than a menial servant. He cannot get clerical or supervisory work to do save in exceptional cases. He cannot teach save in a few of the remaining Negro schools. He cannot become a mechanic except for small transient jobs, and cannot join a trades union…Men are used to seeing Negroes in inferior positions; when, therefore, by any chance a Negro gets in a better position, most men immediately conclude that he is not fitted for it, even before he has a chance to show his fitness…If, therefore, he set up a store, men will not patronize him. If he is put into public position men will complain. If he gain a position in the commercial world, men will quietly secure his dismissal or see that a white man succeeds him."

African-Americans were excluded from fully participating in the agricultural economy of the South and the industrializing economy of the North. The restrictions placed on African-Americans made it difficult for them to develop economic independence, crippling the ability of African-Americans to create and sustain their own economic livelihoods. African-Americans were relegated to the bottom of the economic hierarchies throughout America, and this inferior economic position vis-à-vis whites made it difficult – if not impossible – to generate a material resource base that African-Americans could use to challenge their being relegated to the bottom of the Southern and Northern economic hierarchies.

From the end of Reconstruction through the late 19th Century, African-Americans faced political, cultural and economic separation from whites. By being separated, African-Americans were hindered from becoming full-fledged members of society. They lacked civil rights, their political power was severely restricted, they were shunned from participating in their political community's social life, and they lacked the economic means to create economic self-sufficiency. The final event that solidified (and legalized) white and African-American separation occurred in 1896 with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, establishing the "separate but equal" doctrine.

In the *Plessy* ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court gave constitutional protection to the segregation laws enacted in the South by suggesting that so long as separate facilities for whites and African-Americans were equal, such separation did not run afoul of the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause. It is important to note the arguments used by the Court in rendering its ruling. As Justice Brown in his ruling for the Court indicated (1896: 1358-1359):

> "The object of the 14th Amendment was undoubtedly to enforce the absolute equality of the two races before the law, but, in the nature of things, it could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based upon color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political, equality or a commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either. Laws permitting, and even requiring, their separation, in places where they are liable to brought into contact, do not necessarily imply the inferiority of either race to the other…We consider the underlying fallacy of the plaintiff's argument to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of

> inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it…legislation is powerless to eradicate racial instincts, or to abolish distinctions based upon physical differences, and the attempt to do so can only result in accentuating the difficulties of the present situation. If the civil and political rights of both races be equal, one cannot be inferior to the other civilly or politically. If one race be inferior to the other socially, the constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane."

The *Plessy* ruling effectively denied the fact that having separate facilities constituted discrimination, or that such separation between whites and African-Americans conferred on African-Americans a sense of inferiority. The impact of the *Plessy* ruling was to provide a legal foundation for the practices of separation and segregation that developed in the American polity following Reconstruction. By providing the legal foundation for segregation, the U.S. Supreme Court gave institutional protection to practices that, by any measure, created inferior public facilities and services for African-Americans.

The end of Reconstruction and the development of racial segregation in both the South and North created patterns of racial intergroup relations that solidified white control and dominance over African-Americans, despite the fact that African-Americans were legally free. The patterns of subordination that flowed from the political, social and economic separation of African-Americans were still largely based upon conceptions of white superiority and African-American "inferiority" that had developed prior to the U.S.

Civil War. The question becomes how African-Americans responded to their subordination in American society.

African-Americans and the Search for Liberation

The African-American response to the patterns of white control and dominance that developed in post-Reconstruction America through the early 20th century was varied. The variation in responses depended upon certain assumptions about the place of African-Americans in American society, and what African-Americans could do to change their common plight. Despite the differences in how African-Americans responded to their status in American society, a common theme informed how African-American elites tried to create a positive program of African-American political, social and economic agency. For most African-American elites the common theme was an emphasis on liberation.

What is "Liberation"?

Conceptually, liberation can be defined as 1) the ending of patterns of subordination, dominance and oppression, and 2) the generation of alternative patterns of social, political and economic relations based upon conceptions of institutional fairness, collective self-development, and self-help. For African-Americans, an emphasis on liberation entailed engaging in trenchant critiques of American racial relations, with a concomitant desire to create a positive sense of collective self through emphases on the value of education and equal opportunity. African-American elites sought to generate an alternative conception of what it meant to be African-American, but these elites were also divided as to what positive and progressive program ought to be emphasized to achieve their desired ends of liberation. Some African-American elites stressed assimilation to

American political, social and economic life as the mechanism by which African-Americans would be liberated. Other African-American elites stressed nationalism, and the degree to which an emphasis on racial consciousness and (to varying degrees) separatism was the means to achieve liberation.[66] While these differences are critical and will be emphasized, the larger theoretical argument concerning liberation as the end of African-American elite discourse is extremely important, for it suggests that the organizational development of African-Americans was premised upon this underlying value orientation. Such a commitment enabled African-Americans to develop their own sets of institutions that provided a basis for the revolutionary political, social and economic changes that occurred in the middle of the 20th century.

Assimilation

For several African-American elites, assimilation, or the processes whereby African-Americans would become full-fledged American citizens through the acceptance of American social, political and economic values was critical for the liberation of African-Americans. The importance of emphasizing assimilation was that African-Americans, by accepting and internalizing American values and the practices premised on such values, would become (eventually) members of the American body politic who could enjoy all of the rights and protections associated with such membership.

[66] For some African-American elites, an emphasis on nationalism did require establishing a separate nation outside of the United States that could serve as an institutional basis for African-Americans to achieve political equality. For an example, see Marcus Garvey's arguments below.

Frederick Douglass

In the work of Frederick Douglass, we can see a commitment to assimilation quite clearly (1863: 271):

> "Can the white and colored people of this country be blended into a common nationality, and enjoy together, in the same country, under the same flag, the inestimable blessings of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, as neighborly citizens of a common country?"

For Douglass, the answer to this question is yes, and he provides reasons for this belief (1863: 271-272):

> "The Negro is a man. By every fact, by every argument, by every rule of measurement, mental, moral or spiritual, by everything in the heavens above and in the earth beneath which vindicates the humanity of any class of beings, the Negro's humanity is equally vindicated…the foundation of all governments and all codes of laws is in the fact that man is a rational creature, and is capable of guiding his conduct by ideas of right and wrong, of good and evil, by hope of reward and fear of punishment. Can any man doubt that the Negro answers this description?"

While the question Douglass asks is mainly rhetorical, it is important to note that for Douglass, African-Americans have the relevant capacities to be American citizens. As he indicates (1863: 272):

> "I claim for the colored man that he possesses all of the natural conditions and attributes essential to the character of a good citizen. He can understand the requirements of the law and the reason of the law. He can obey the law, and

> with his arm and life defend and execute the law. The preservation of society, the protection of persons and property are the simple and primary objects for which governments are instituted among men."

Because African-Americans can be considered good citizens, Douglass rejects any claims that African-Americans come from an "inferior" race, or that they lack the relevant capabilities to be full-fledged members of the American polity. Douglass' emphasis on African-Americans being viable political agents and his belief that only through assimilation will African-Americans truly be free, lead him to advocate for the granting of certain important rights to African-Americans, namely the right to vote. As he discusses (1865: 278):

> "I am for the 'immediate, unconditional, and universal' enfranchisement of the black man, in every State in the Union. Without this, his liberty is a mockery; without this, you might as well almost retain the old name of slavery for his condition; for in fact, if he is not the slave of the individual master, he is the slave of society, and holds his liberty as a privilege, not as a right. He is at the mercy of the mob, and has no means of protecting himself."

The right to vote is important for Douglass because insofar as African-Americans have the right to vote, they are able to protect their interests and feel secure in their status as co-equal citizens with whites. The denial of the right to vote amounts to a denial of human political agency and for Douglass, such a denial flies in the face of American political values. If African-Americans cannot vote, there is no incentive for them to develop those traits and capabilities required for self-government, undercutting the value

associated with African-American assimilation into American political, social and economic life.

Coupled with Douglass's emphasis on enfranchisement is his commitment to allowing African-Americans to develop their own talents and capabilities. If American society is unwilling to allow for this, Douglass envisions a society in moral decline. As he states (1884: 301-302):

> "No man can put a chain about the ankle of his fellow man, without at last finding the other end of it fastened about his own neck. The lesson of all the ages on this point is that a wrong done to one man, is a wrong done to all men. It may not be felt at the moment, and the evil day may be long delayed, but so sure as there is a moral government of the universe, so sure will the harvest of evil come."

Douglass suggests that American society, if it is a moral society, ought to recognize the link between the fate of African-Americans and whites. Douglass suggests that in order for this recognition to become apparent, one only needs to see that African-Americans are permanent members of American society and that African-Americans share common bonds with other members of the American polity. Because of these bonds, Douglass is optimistic that assimilation will provide African-Americans with the necessary means to be free. As he indicates (1884: 308):

> "the Negro will rise in the social scale. For a time the social and political privileges of the colored people may decrease. This, however, will be apparent rather than real. An abnormal condition, born of war, carried him to an altitude unsuited to his attainments. He could not sustain himself there. He will now rise

> naturally and gradually, and hold on to what he gets, and will not drop from dizziness. He will gain both by concession and by self-assertion. Shrinking cowardice wins nothing from either meanness or magnanimity. Manly self-assertion and eternal vigilance are essential to Negro liberty, not less than to that of the white man."

While Douglass alludes here to the fact that African-Americans might need to become self-assertive, it is important to note the degree to which Douglass sees the future condition of African-Americans bound to America. The point for Douglass is to suggest that only through assimilation will African-Americans achieve their life goals and aspirations. The emphasis of some elites in his day on "race pride" and the development of African-Americans as a "race" are misguided due to the alienation it would generate between African-Americans and the wider American society (1889: 316):

> "One of the few errors to which we are clinging most persistently and, as I think, most mischievously has come into great prominence of late. It is the cultivation and stimulation amongst us of a sentiment which we are pleased to call "race pride"…I see no benefit to be derived from this everlasting exhortation by speakers and writers among us to the cultivation of race pride. On the contrary, I see it as a positive evil. It is building on a false foundation. Besides, what is the thing we are fighting against, and what are we fighting for in this country? What is the mountain devil, the lion in the way of our progress? What is it, but American race pride, an assumption of superiority upon the ground of race and color?"

Douglass' main concern is the development of a sense of racial separatism or a

nation within a nation. For him, the emphasis ought to be on generating common bonds between African-Americans and whites (1889: 319). Douglass shows a commitment to assimilation and the creation of a nation that is inclusive, based upon the "spirit of justice, liberty and fair play" (1889: 328). Ultimately Douglass believes that American society can become one that is informed by a sense of justice, freedom and equal opportunity.

Douglass's thought in the late 19th Century shows a commitment to assimilation. He advocates for the unification of whites and African-Americans as one people and as one nation. It is important to note that for Douglass, only when whites and African-Americans develop these common bonds can African-Americans pursue and develop their own ends, dreams and life goals. In order to be liberated, African-Americans must cast their lot with America, and the values America embodies.

Booker T. Washington

Much like Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington advocated for African-American assimilation to American patterns of social, political and economic life. For Washington, the question became how African-Americans would accomplish their assimilation. The major emphasis running throughout Washington's thought in regards to assimilation concerned the importance of industrial education for African-Americans. We can see this quite clearly in his work.

For example, Washington discusses how an emphasis on industrial education helps African-Americans to develop their economic skills, but also appeals to whites in the South (1884: 355):

> "A certain class of whites [in the] South object to the general education of the colored man on the ground that when he is educated he ceases to do manual labor,

> and there is no evading the fact that much aid is withheld from Negro education in the South by the states on these grounds. Just here the great mission of industrial education coupled with the mental comes in. It 'kills two birds with one stone,' viz.: secures the cooperation of the whites, and does the best possible thing for the black man."

Washington believes that a focus on industrial education will not only give African-American marketable skills, but will also help cultivate in African-Americans a desire for labor and the value associated with being able to do things that have practical application. To better understand what Washington means by industrial education and its value, it is useful to consider the ideas that informed his Tuskegee Institute founded in 1881. This is so because Washington used his institute to develop his conception of industrial education (1884: 356):

> "The school keeps three points before it: first, to give the student the best mental training; secondly to furnish him with labor that will be valuable to the school, and that will enable the student to learn something from the labor *per se*; thirdly to teach the dignity of labor. A *chance* to help himself is what we want to give to every student" (emphasis original).

The purpose of industrial education is to cultivate in African-Americans the ability to think about how to solve their own plight through the use of skills and training that prepare them to be useful and valuable for society. Washington's idea of industrial education centers on the value associated with the development of skills and a set of values which emphasize the importance of working with one's hands. His conception of

industrial education is then linked to developing a bond with Southern whites (1895: 357):

> "To those of my race who depend upon bettering their condition in a foreign land, or who underestimate the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the Southern white man who is your next-door neighbor, I would say: 'Cast down your bucket where you are" – cast it down in making friends, in every manly way of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded. Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions…Our greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that the masses of us are to live by the productions of our hands, and fail to keep in mind that we shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify common labor, and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life; shall prosper in proportion as we learn to draw the line between the superficial and the substantial, the ornamental gewgaws of life and the useful. No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top."

Washington's conception of industrial education involves a recognition on the part of African-Americans that one has to build a foundation. This foundation centers on being useful to society, and generating a desire to work. African-American success, at least for Washington, depends on building such a foundation. In the absence of having a desire to accomplish useful work, there is no basis for pulling one's self upward toward

higher goals and achievements such as being able to use political rights and participate in society. As Washington indicates (1895: 359):

> "The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all the privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing. No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long, in any degree, ostracized. It is important and right that all privileges of the law be ours, but it is vastly more important that we be prepared for the exercise of those privileges. The opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory just now is worth infinitely more than the opportunity to spend a dollar in an opera house."

The assimilationist argument is apparent here: African-Americans would be more easily accepted by whites if they would develop the skills and capacities to enable them to bring themselves up, slowly and surely, by their own exertion and effort (1906: 380):

> "The palms of victory are not for the race that merely complains and frets and rails. I do not mean to say that there is not a place for race loyalty and enthusiasm. There is a proper and vital place for protests against wrongs, but no race must be content with mere protests. Every race must show to the world by tangible, visible, indisputable evidence that it can do more than merely call attention to the wrongs inflicted upon it…It is important to have one's own dooryard clean before calling attention to the imperfection in the neighbor's yard. Each Negro can put much into the life of his race by making his own individual

> life represent a model in purity and patience, in industry and courage, in showing the world how to get strength out of difficulties."

The point of cultivating a desire for hard work and effort is that one can be a model to others, showing how a commitment to effort and personal exertion can be beneficial for all. Washington's use of the dooryard analogy is perfect here, for it suggests that African-Americans cannot critique the behavior of whites until they have generated the necessary values and social mores to sustain their own livelihood. In so doing, they can show others (especially whites) that they have value and are worthy of respect by others.

An excellent example of Washington's commitment to working hard and its benefits for African-Americans can be found in his *Progress of the American Negro* (1907a). In this work, Washington details how African-Americans, despite their difficult circumstances, have managed to be successful. He defines success in a number of ways, focusing on a variety of measures of success. These measures deal with population levels as well as public spending on African-American education in the South. His discussion of educational spending is particularly illuminating (1907a: 397):

> "Since 1880 $105,807,930 has been spent for the Negro schools in the former slave states. In the school year, 1879-80, $2,120,485 was spent for colored schools, and in 1900-01, $6,035,550 – an increase of $3,915,065, or almost 285 per cent. In 1879-80 the expenditure per capita of the school population for the colored was $1.01, but in 1900-01, $2.21. It is true that in the latter year the white child received $4.92 or considerably more than twice the amount received by the

> colored child. I believe, nevertheless, that the whole South is interested in the spread of Negro education."

Despite the large inequalities in education spending for white and African-American children, Washington still perceived this as an amazing fact, showing evidence that in the South, whites were becoming more committed to the spread of African-American education. This was a major accomplishment for Washington, as it suggested to him that his plan of educating African-Americans would work for solving white resistance to supporting African-American inclusion in society.

More importantly for Washington was the changes he noticed in the illiteracy rates of Southern African-Americans. He attributed these changes to the spread of African-American schools in the South (1907a: 397-398):

> "Negro illiteracy is a stain that the schools are rapidly washing away. Though constituting only 13.1 percent of the total population in 1880, the colored population bore the burden of 51.6 percent of the illiteracy. Though 70 percent of the colored population were illiterate in 1880, only 45.5 percent were illiterate in 1900 – a magnificent progress for the South and the Negro. It is true for the whole country that only 4.6 per cent of the native white population was illiterate in 1900, as against 44.5 percent of the colored, but the South is determined to lessen this immense handicap upon the Negro just as rapidly as possible. During my efforts toward the uplift of some part of my race, I have had reason again and again to recognize that the mere ability to read and write is not all an American citizen must have; he must be and he must have sound moral character. Too often members of my race have been content with merely being "smart". I am glad to

> say that in many schools in the South carpentry and gardening have been emboldened to stand erect in company with reading, writing and arithmetic. But aside from these matters, the Negro has progressed since 1880 in literacy in the most gratifying way; to appreciable extent progress in literacy indicates progress in intelligence, in character, in general efficiency."

Again, despite the disparities between whites and African-Americans in literacy rates, Washington interprets the decrease as testament to the effects of education on improving African-American moral character as well as their capacity to be more productive workers. Even with the advances Washington saw in education spending and the decrease in African-American literacy rates, nothing more showed success to him than African-Americans owing their own homes (1907a: 399):

> "In 1860 the Negro was without a home of his own, without capital, without thrift, with nothing like proper appreciation of the value of a home. And yet in 1890, of the homes occupied by Negro heads of families, 18.7 percent were owned – an immense advance in civilization, and all in thirty years. Moreover, of the homes thus owned, 88.8 were owned absolutely free of all encumbrances."

Beyond African-Americans owning their own homes as sign of their economic success, Washington also saw the rise in African-American property ownership as a further indication that African-Americans were laying the groundwork for their own economic independence. Washington emphasizes the growth in African-American ownership of farms and land tenancy from 1860-1900 in comparison to whites (1907a: 400):

> "In forty years the number of farms operated by white farmers increased 371,414 and of that number 148,601 or 40 percent were those of owners or managers and 222,813 or 60 percent those of tenants. At the same time 287,933 Negroes had acquired control of farm land in these states of whom 202,578 or 70.4 percent where tenants and 85,355 or 29.6 per cent were owners or managers. In these eventual forty years the relative number of owners among the Negro farmers of the South Atlantic States has grown from absolutely nothing, three-fourths as rapidly as the relative number of owners among the whites, who in 1860 owned every acre of the land. In both the South and the Central States and South Atlantic States the Negroes have thus compassed a magnificent achievement."

From the increase in public education spending for African-American education in the South, to ownership of homes and property, Washington saw signs that African-Americans were becoming economically independent, and for Washington, this was mainly due to the rise of African-American schools in the South that gave African-Americans the requisite skills and abilities to be economically successful.

As Washington further indicated that he attributed the economic development of African-Americans to their industrial training. The crucial point for Washington was that African-Americans had started to become economically independent, and such independence helped to facilitate a common bond between African-Americans and whites in the South (1907b: 414):

> "The white citizens were all the more willing to encourage the Negro in this economic or industrial development, because they saw that the prosperity of the Negro meant also the prosperity of the white man. They say, too, that when a

> Negro became the owner of a home and was a taxpayer, having a regular trade or other occupation, he at once became a conservative and safe citizen and voter; one who would consider the interests of his whole community before casting his ballot; and, further, one whose ballot could not be purchased."

The point Washington emphasized was how whites and African-Americans could forge social bonds through the economic development of African-Americans which would allow African-Americans to be seen as viable community members by whites. While it would seem that Washington's arguments concerning industrial education of African-Americans and the impact such education would have on their relationship with whites showed optimism for solving the "Negro problem" in the South, Washington's arguments came under fire.

The assault on Washington's ideas came from those African-Americans who saw value in the literary and liberal education afforded by higher educational institutions as the basis for developing a sense of self-worth and dignity in African-Americans. Washington was highly critical of such arguments and Washington engaged with his African-American critics who saw his emphasis on industrial education for African-Americans as a problem in that it seemed to be a concession on the part of African-Americans to remain agricultural workers. Washington suggested that this critique was problematic, for it relied on an assumption that higher education was somehow "better" for African-Americans when in fact, industrial education both enabled African-Americans to be useful and to create relationships with whites. Washington was especially critical of those African-American intellectuals who neglected to focus on the

reality of African-American experiences in the South, and the degree to which (1911: 429):

> "They…had not considered the profound difference between the political problem and the educational problem, between the work of destruction and of construction, as it applies to the task of race building."

The intellectuals who critiqued Washington's arguments neglected to see how his emphasis on industrial education provided the groundwork for African-Americans to deal with the unequal political status of African-Americans both in the South but also the North. As he states (1911: 431):

> "My experience is that people who call themselves, "The Intellectuals" understand theories, but they do not understand things. I have long been convinced that, if these men could have gone into the South and taken up and become interested in some practical work which would have brought them in touch with people and things, the whole world would have looked very different to them. Bad as conditions might have seemed at first, when they saw that actual progress was being made, they would have taken a more hopeful view of the situation."

The conflict that was created between Washington and the intellectuals centered on the proper program for "race" development, both economically, but also politically. While it might seem that Washington was anti-intellectual, it is also important to note that Washington did not just accept the problematic social and political conditions of African-Americans in the South.

He was highly critical of the racial segregation that had developed in the South. As he states in regards to segregation (1915: 463):

> "1. It is unjust, 2. It invites other unjust measures, 3. It will not be productive of good, because practically every thoughtful Negro resents its injustice and doubts its sincerity…Wherever a form of segregation exists it will be found that it has been administered in such a way as to embitter the Negro and harm more or less the moral fibre of the white man. That the Negro does not express this constant sense of wrong is no proof that he does not feel it."

The critiques leveled by Washington in dealing with Southern segregation shows that he was not oblivious to the pernicious effects of segregation on Southern society. While it might seem that Washington's commitment to industrial education amounted to a concession on the part of African-Americans to whites in the South, he nevertheless retained a commitment to African-American enfranchisement and the ability of African-Americans to develop politically, socially and economically.

Nationalism

W.E.B. Du Bois

In contrast to Booker T. Washington and Frederick Douglass, W.E. B. Du Bois was an African-American writer and thinker who advocated for a deeper conception of racial cohesion between African-Americans. For Du Bois, the most important political project of African-Americans was to develop as a "race". Of course, this meant that Du Bois had to describe and define what he meant by "race". Du Bois defined "race" in the following way (1897: 485):

> "What, then, is a race? It is a vast family of human beings, generally of common

> blood and language, always of common history, traditions and impulses, who are both voluntarily and involuntarily striving together for the accomplishment of certain more or less vividly conceived ideals of life."

The emphasis placed by Du Bois on "race" as being (partly) constituted by 'conceived ideals of life' meant that, despite the physical differences demarcating "races" (1897: 486):

> "No mere physical distinctions would really define or explain the deeper differences – the cohesiveness and continuity of these groups. The deeper differences are spiritual, psychical, differences – undoubtedly based upon the physical, but infinitely transcending them…their race identity and common blood; a common history, common laws and religion, similar habits of thought and a conscious striving together for certain ideals of life."

What Du Bois' definitions suggest is that "race" is a historically constructed category that binds together a group of individuals based upon common values, norms and practices. The importance of these definitions is that they led Du Bois to emphasize the development of African-American racial identity. For Du Bois, such an emphasis was not so easy to describe because African-Americans struggled with defining such an identity (1897: 488):

> "No Negro who has given earnest thought to the situation of his people in America has failed, at some time in life, to find himself at these cross-roads; has failed to ask himself at some time: What, after all, am I? Am I an American or am I a Negro? Can I be both? Or is it my duty to cease to be a Negro as soon as

> possible and be an American? If I strive as a Negro, am I not perpetuating the very cleft that threatens and separates Black and White America? Is not my only possible practical aim the subduction of all that is Negro in me to the American?" (488).

The tensions found in American society regarding the place of African-Americans informs Du Bois's thinking on the subject of African-American racial identity. For example, Du Bois speaks about the "double-consciousness'" African-Americans are subject to in America (1903a: 222):

> "After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and the Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, - a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, - an American, a Negro: two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, - this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self."

Despite the tensions that Du Bois emphasized, he was committed to a unique conception of African-American racial identity (1897: 489):

> "Here, it seems to me, is the reading of the riddle that puzzles so many of us.

> We are Americans, not only by birth and by citizenship, but by our political ideals, our language, our religion. Further than that, our Americanism does not go. At that point, we are Negroes, members of a vast historic race…As such, it is our duty to conserve our physical powers, our intellectual endowments, our spiritual ideas; as a race we must strive by race organization, by race solidarity, by race unity to the realization of that broader humanity which freely recognizes differences in men, but sternly deprecates inequality in their opportunities and development"

Du Bois's conception of African-American racial identity emphasized not only the unique traits of African-Americans, but also the underlying egalitarian norms that inform how men ought to be treated by one another. His emphasis on opportunities and development is crucial since it provided a basis for African-American agency (1897: 489):

> "Weighted with a heritage of moral iniquity from our past history, hard pressed in the economic world by foreign immigrants and native prejudice, hated here, despised there and pitied everywhere; our one haven of refuge is ourselves and but one means of advance, our own belief in our great destiny, our own implicit trust in our ability and worth."

African-Americans have the capacity and the ability to become self-sufficient and independent. The problem for Du Bois is that African-Americans seem to forget their inherent worth, value and purpose as a "race". In so doing, African-Americans neglect to see that the pursuit of African-American political, social and economic success depends upon the hard work of African-Americans themselves (1899: 503-504):

> "Against prejudice, injustice and wrong the Negro ought to protest energetically and continuously, but he must never forget that he protests because those things hinder his own efforts, and that those efforts are the key to his future. And those efforts must be mighty and comprehensive, persistent, well-aimed and tireless; satisfied with no partial success, lulled to sleep by no colorless victories; and, above all, guided by no low selfish ideals…Work, continuous and intensive; work, although it be menial and poorly rewarded; work, though done in travail of soul and sweat of brow, must be so impressed upon Negro children as the road to salvation, that a child would feel it a greater disgrace to be idle than to do the humblest labor. The homely virtues of honesty, truth and chastity must be instilled in the cradle, and although it is hard to teach self-respect to a people whose million fellow-citizens half-despise them, yet it must be taught as the surest road to gain the respect of others."

When African-Americans are committed to working hard, through both personal and collective exertion to develop themselves as a "race", they can not only generate self-respect, but also the respect of others. It is important to note that Du Bois does see the agency of African-Americans as constricted by race prejudice and segregation, but also that African-Americans can and must overcome these hindrances as a means to generate agency.

It is in Du Bois's conception of self-exertion as generating African-American agency that leads him to be critical of previous thinkers, especially Booker T. Washington, who he perceives as advocating acquiescence on the part of African-Americans to white supremacy and control. For Du Bois, Washington's emphasis on

industrial education undercuts African-American self exertion to achieve the ideals and values of the African-American race. As he states, Washington effectively asks (1903b: 514):

> "that black people give up, at least for the present, three things: First, political power, Second, insistence on civil rights, Third, higher education of Negro youth, and concentrate all their energies on industrial education, the accumulation of wealth, and the conciliation of the South."

The end result of Washington's policy of conciliation on the part of African-Americans undercuts the agency of African-Americans by linking the worth and value of the African-American "race" to the dictates of Southern segregation and racial inequality. In so doing, despite Washington's belief in African-American uplift, his policy effectively renders African-Americans subservient. This subservience makes it much more difficult to promote and value the unique ideals of African-Americans as a race.

Given Du Bois's critique of Washington's emphasis on industrial education, how then does Du Bois believe African-Americans will be empowered as a race? For Du Bois, it comes through the leadership of what he terms the "Talented Tenth". Du Bois advocates for a top down form of collective self-development.

Du Bois describes how the intellectual elite of African-Americans can help direct the "race" toward the need for collective self-realization and development. The value of the intellectual elite for Du Bois is that they have the abilities and capacities to mobilize the masses for a positive program of racial empowerment. The problem is that the creation of this "Talented Tenth" requires the generation of institutions of higher education that can help cultivate in this elite an enlightened conception of racial group

interests and needs. What Du Bois effectively advocates is a system of African-American education that stresses the development of the mind and the body (1903c: 527):

> "A system of education is not one thing, nor does it have a single definite object, nor is it a mere matter of schools. Education is that whole system of human training within and without the school house walls, which molds and develops men. If then we start out to train an ignorant and unskilled people with a heritage of bad habits, our system of training must set before itself two great aims – the one dealing with knowledge and character, the other part seeking to give the technical knowledge necessary for him to earn a living under the present circumstances."

It is important to note that despite the elitism implied by Du Bois's conception of the "Talented Tenth", his understanding of the role of education links together elites and the masses: the elites can help cultivate in the masses a sense of self-worth and value, and the masses are given useful skills to begin the difficult process of building a solid economic foundation for racial improvement. The point of the "Talented Tenth" for Du Bois is to create a group-based conception of collective development where different elements of the group serve each other to pursue the interests and ideals of the race.

Marcus Garvey

In contrast to both Douglass and Washington, the thought of Marcus Garvey stressed the separation of races, and need for African-Americans to create and sustain their own independent institutions. The basis for his argument rested on the problematic conditions of African-Americans in America, and the fact (at least according to him) that

whites would never be willing to assimilate African-Americans or treat them as political equals (1922a: 553):

> "Some Negro leaders have advanced the belief that in another few years the white people will make up their minds to assimilate their black populations. This belief is preposterous…the white man of America, will not, to any organized extent, assimilate the Negro, because in so doing, he feels that he will be committing racial suicide" (553).

Due to Garvey's belief that whites in America want to preserve their racial heritage and purity, the desire (and seeking) of African-Americans for assimilation into American society is a mistake. Instead, African-Americans should seek a nation of their own in Africa separate from whites in America. By emphasizing a commitment to nationalism, Garvey also sees a connection between the oppression of African-Americans and their fellow Africans the world over (1922b: 554):

> "As far as Negroes are concerned, in America we have the problem of lynching, peonage and dis-franchisement. In the West Indies, South and Central America we have the problem of peonage, serfdom, industrial and political governmental inequality. We cannot allow a continuation of these crimes against our race. As four hundred million men, women and children, worthy of the existence given us by the Divine Creator, we are determined to solve our own problem, by redeeming our Motherland Africa from the hands of alien exploiters and found there a government, a nation of our own, strong enough to lend protection to the members of our race scattered all over the world, and to compel the respect of the nations and races of the earth. Until the Negro reaches this point of *national*

> *independence*, all he does as a race will count for naught, because the prejudice that will stand out against him even with his ballot in his hand, with his industrial progress to show, will be of such an overwhelming nature as to perpetuate mob violence and mob rule, from which he will suffer, and which he will not be able to stop with his industrial wealth and with his ballot" (emphasis added).

The critical element of Garvey's argument is that in the absence of an independent, sovereign nation for African-Americans, no amount of political power or economic wealth will enable African-Americans (and Africans the world over) to be able to pursue their own collective goals as a "race". The collective goals that Garvey believes African-Americans ought to pursue mirror (to some degree) those described by Washington and Du Bois: self-reliance and self-respect. As Garvey states (1923: 564):

> "The disposition of the many to depend upon the other races for a kindly and sympathetic consideration of their needs, without making the effort to do for themselves, has been the race's standing disgrace by which we have been judged and though we have created the strongest prejudice against ourselves. There is no force like success, and that is why the individual makes all efforts to surround himself throughout life with the evidence of it. The Negro must be up and doing if he will break down the prejudice of the rest of the world. Prayer alone is not going to improve our condition, nor the policy of watchful waiting. We must strike out for ourselves in the course of material achievement, and by our own effort and energy present to the world those forces by which the progress of man is judged. No Negro, let him be American, European, West Indian or African, shall be truly respected until the race as a whole has emancipated itself, through

> self-achievement and progress…The Negro will have to build his own government, industry, art, science, literature and culture, before the world will stop to consider him. Until then, we are but wards…and outcasts of a standard social system."

Garvey's emphasis on self-reliance and self-achievement as a basis for African-American racial progress and power requires the establishment of African institutions and cultural practices to make self-achievement a reality. This argument is different than that of Washington and Du Bois because Garvey believes achievement and respect for the African "race" can only be found in racial separatism and a rejection of seeking political and economic power through racist institutions and practices. By advocating racial separatism through recognizing the inherent racism and discrimination of American society, Garvey distances himself from those who seek to reform American institutions to fully include African-Americans. Reform for Garvey will not work, nor will a commitment to African-American assimilation. Instead, African-Americans, as he indicates must give up seeking political, social and economic equality in America in order to achieve such equality (1924: 576):

> "White and black will learn to respect each other when they cease to be active competitors in the same countries for the same things in politics and society. Let them have countries of their own, wherein to aspire and climb without rancor. The races can be friendly and helpful to each other, but the laws of nature separate us to the extent of each and every one developing by itself."

Garvey's arguments surrounding racial separatism, and the ability of

African-Americans to only achieve equality through such separatism, reveals an underlying pessimism about the likelihood of African-Americans being able to achieve racial goals and solidarity through coordinated action with whites. Instead, Garvey seeks to ground African-American agency and collective self-hood in the unique institutions and practices that would constitute an African nation-state.

Critical Appraisal of Douglass, Washington, Du Bois and Garvey

The insights of Douglass, Washington, Du Bois and Garvey are incredibly important as they form the conceptual foundation for the egalitarian-transformative racial narrative. The emphasis of all four authors centers on challenging white supremacy and promoting the key normative values of equal respect and dignity in an effort to liberate African-Americans from the prejudice, discrimination and inequalities they faced. Despite the differences that arise between these four authors, all believe in the need for African-Americans to work hard collectively to build common institutions, to achieve political and social equality, and to generate economic independence. The emphasis on self-reliance and self-help is crucial. By focusing upon the need for self-reliance, these authors suggested that liberation could only come from the exertions of African-Americans as they worked to change their status within American society and abroad. The ideas of self-reliance and self-help indicate that in the absence of African-Americans working to achieve their goals and aspirations as a "race", little can be done to change their collective plight.

The concepts of equal respect, dignity and self-help are also important because they provide a foundation for the development of African-American organizations which can be used to address the common problems facing all African-Americans. Such

organizations as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (founded by Du Bois in 1910), and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) (founded by Garvey in 1917) are good examples of organization that are based upon underlying norms of equal respect, dignity and self-help. While the UNIA virtually disappeared by the mid 1920s, the NAACP was a powerful organizational actor that had much influence as African-Americans engaged in the destruction of white supremacy beginning in the 1930s. The important point is that such organizations require a normative basis for their functioning, otherwise the activities of such organizations lack purpose and meaning. The linkage between organizational power and the normative foundations of such power resides in how meaning is attributed to the activities of individuals, social collectives and organizations.

The central argument is that the conceptual foundations laid by the work of Douglass, Washington, Du Bois and Garvey provided the basis of an egalitarian-transformative racial narrative which was then linked to the activities of organizations and social collectives.[67] The ability of African-Americans throughout the early to mid 20th century to begin the process of breaking down white supremacy was facilitated by the egalitarian-transformative narrative conceptually developed by Douglass, Washington, Du Bois and Garvey, and then put into practice by organizations and social collectives agitating for the liberation of African-Americans.

Because the work of Douglass, Washington, Du Bois and Garvey provided the central conceptual foundations for the egalitarian-transformative narrative, it is useful to see how African-Americans used their ideas throughout the early 20th century. As will be

[67] The work of Garvey is also important for the development of the Nationalist-Solidarist racial narrative. See chapter 5.

shown, the ideas and arguments of Douglass, Washington, Du Bois and Garvey would prove to be pivotal for mobilizing African-Americans to achieve racial change in American politics.

1910-1940: Building the Foundations of African-American Agitation for Civil Rights

By the end of the 19th century and through the early decades of the 20th century, racial segregation in the American South had taken its toll on African-Americans. The oppressive conditions and a lack of economic, social and political power made life for Southern African-Americans extremely difficult. Because of the problematic nature of Southern racial relations, and an intense labor shortage in the North during World War I, African-Americans migrated in very large numbers to the North to seek industrial employment. In the early years of the 20th century (from 1900-1909) almost 200,000 African-Americans went North, and by 1920, almost a half a million African-Americans had left the South (McAdam 1982: 74; Marable 2007: 9-10). The effects of this population shift were profound.

First, it created a new source of African-American political power in the North. Because African-Americans were able to vote in the North, the geographical centralization of African-Americans in the urban centers of Northern cities enabled African-Americans to use their large numbers to elect African-American representatives to both state legislatures and the U.S. Congress (Klarman 2007: 113). The influx of African-Americans to Northern cities did create racial tensions between African-Americans and whites, but the effect of African-American migration North was to give greater political power to African-Americans.

Secondly, it helped African-Americans develop communities that served African-American needs. Of particular importance was the role that Harlem played in the development of new intellectuals devoted to creating African-American art, music and literature. For example, the work of Langston Hughes was enormously influential as it advocated for the value and importance of African-American art and literature in helping to cultivate in African-Americans a sense of pride. As Hughes indicates (1922: 279):

> "To my mind, it is the duty of the younger Negro artist, if he accepts any duties at all from outsiders, to change the force of his art that old whispering "I want to be white," hidden in the aspirations of his people, to "Why should I want to be white? I am a Negro – and beautiful!""

Hughes's argument suggested that African-Americans ought to cultivate a sense that their "race" was valuable and important for their self-concept. His argument also suggested that African-Americans should be willing to engage in intellectual activities that celebrated African-American life and culture. Hughes also implied that African-Americans, through their newly developing sense of pride, could cultivate their own cultural practices and that these practices were not only valuable, but also an indication that African-Americans sought to be engaged in the work of developing themselves (and their "race") intellectually and morally.

The migration of African-Americans to Northern cities also enabled the collective action of African-Americans through labor unions. While it was the case that African-Americans met resistance by white laborers (Harris 1932: 296-297), African-Americans did join labor unions. The reasons for African-Americans joining labor unions are many, including a greater protection of their economic livelihood, but it is important to note that

what drew African-Americans to organized labor was the impact that the Communist Party had in many Northern labor unions.

For African-Americans, the ideas of Communists matched their underlying desire for eradicating racial and economic oppression. This can be seen clearly in the work of Cyril V. Briggs, the primary organizer and leader of the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB), an organization which sought to unionize African-American workers in the North.

For Briggs, the ABB sought to link racial and economic oppression. African-Americans suffered from prejudice and domination not only because of their race, but also because of their relationship to capitalist owners. The separation of African-American and white workers was due to the promulgation of racist ideas and the generation of racist practices by capitalists to divide the African-American and white working classes (Briggs 1932: 248). Briggs suggested that overcoming the racial conflicts between white and African-American workers was central to ending the power of both racism and economic exploitation. Both white workers and African-American workers shared a common bond – economic exploitation – and overcoming racial differences would allow for the coordinated activities of both white and African-American workers to control and limit the power of capitalist owners (see also Hudson 1979: 314). By linking racial and economic oppression, the Communist Party was able to galvanize African-American participation in organized labor. Despite the small numbers of African-Americans who were formally members of Northern labor unions in the late 1920s (Harris 1932: 299), by the late 1930s African-Americans had joined labor unions en masse (Marable 2007: 15-16).

By the end of the 1920s, the large population of African-Americans in Northern cities had developed the foundations of an emerging black counterpublic. African-Americans were participating politically, they had developed communities that enabled them to celebrate their own culture and to develop institutions such as churches, shops and civic groups which focused on their needs, and they began to participate in organized labor.[68] The social networks that African-Americans developed in Northern cities were important, as they linked together African-Americans culturally, politically and economically. These networks also provided mechanisms for African-Americans to share information, and they helped to empower African-Americans as they continued to deal with white supremacy and racial segregation in the South as well as in the North.

Despite the gains made by African-Americans during the first decades of the 20th century, the Great Depression of the late 1920s hit African-American communities in the North and South particularly hard. African-Americans had difficulty finding employment in the North, and the competition for scarce jobs created a strong white backlash in the North, prompting whites to use a variety of mechanisms – including violence – to limit the economic opportunities of African-Americans (Klarman 2007: 114-115). African-Americans suffered greatly during the Great Depression, but with the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) in 1932, the economic and political opportunities of African-Americans were to expand.

The New Deal and African-Americans

The election of FDR in 1932 and New Deal programs did benefit African-Americans economically as well as politically (Klarman 2007: 116). As part of the New

[68] It is important to note that the entrance of African-Americans into organized labor was not an easy process, and many faced racism and discrimination within organized labor. For an overview of the racism and discrimination African-Americans faced, see Frymer 2008.

Deal coalition, African-Americans became important politically for FDR and the Democrats, especially as African-Americans continued to migrate North in large numbers throughout the 1930s and 1940s. By the 1930s,

> "Democratic politicians in a number of northern cities began actively to court the black vote as one component of what was to become the familiar urban Democratic coalition. Nationally, the decisive break came a bit later in 1936 when the black electorate, which had returned Republican majorities in seventeen straight presidential elections, went overwhelmingly for Roosevelt" (McAdam 1982: 81).

The partisan shift of Northern (as well as Southern) African-Americans to the Democratic Party had an impact on the policies chosen by FDR. For example, despite the segregation that existed in the U.S. federal government during the 1930s (King 1995: 31), FDR vastly increased the number of black federal employees from "50,000 in 1933 to 200,000 by 1946" (Marable 2007: 13). He also gave several African-American elites administrative posts within the executive branch (Klarman 2007: 116; Marable 2007: 13). The fact that FDR made such decisions despite the Southern wing of his coalition shows that FDR, due to the shift in African-American partisanship and voting, had to accommodate the interests of African-Americans.

> "The strategic location of the Negro minority in the North had made it sometimes more important to the success of the Democratic party in national elections than the disaffected whites in the Southern wing of the [Democratic Party]".
>
> The effect of the migration of African-Americans to the North was to make

African-Americans important electorally for the Democrats. If FDR and the Democrats were going to retain the African-American vote in the North (and develop it in the South), some concessions and policy changes benefiting African-Americans would need to be pursued (Woodward 1966: 129).

Though FDR did respond to African-American interests, it is important to note that during the New Deal, African-Americans also had to struggle to force deeper concessions from FDR in regards to American racial relations (McAdam 1982: 84). Despite the electoral value of the African-American vote to Democrats, racial prejudice and discrimination still limited the reforms and policy changes that FDR and other Democrats were willing to champion. For example, in 1941, the civil rights activist A. Philip Randolph, who was critical of the discrimination in hiring found within the defense industries and the military, threatened to stage an African-American march on Washington, D.C. unless FDR established the Fair Employment Practices Committee to deal with accusations of racial discrimination in employment. At first FDR resisted, but ultimately he capitulated and signed executive order no. 8802, creating the committee (Marable 2007: 13). The fact that FDR resisted signing the executive order until he was sure that African-Americans might march in Washington, D.C. indicates that despite the electoral value of African-Americans, he was still hesitant about engaging in deeper reforms of American racial intergroup relations.

The New Deal did help African-Americans, but FDR was not willing to engage in reforms and pursue policies which fundamentally changed the status of African-Americans in American society. Even though African-Americans were electorally important for Democrats, the wider commitment in American society to racial

segregation (and in the Southern wing of the Democratic Party) prohibited FDR from creating and implementing deeper reforms that would transform American racial relations. The catalyst that would generate such a transformation was World War II.

1945-1965: African-Americans and the Civil Rights Movement

World War II was a turning point in African-American struggles for ending racial discrimination and segregation. "Thousands of black men working as sharecroppers and farm laborers were drafted into the army with the outbreak of World War II. Over three million black men registered for the service" (Marable 2007: 14). The effect of wide-scale mobilization of African-Americans for the war effort not only showed that African-Americans were committed to fighting for their country, but they were also willing to support the war effort domestically as almost a million African-American men and women were involved in war time industry. The infusion of African-Americans into the war-time economy and the military prompted many African-Americans to seriously consider their status in American society. In World War II, the United States was fighting to end fascism abroad, which provided a normative basis for the American war effort. The fact that World War II was based on a commitment to ending fascism (both its Italian and German variants) internationally showed the deep contradictions between American foreign policy and domestic policies regarding the status of African-Americans in society. As African-Americans returned to America following World War II, they became more aware of the contradiction between trying to end fascism internationally, but allowing for Nazi-like policies regarding racial segregation domestically. The discrepancies that African-Americans found in American society helped to generate a stronger condemnation of racial segregation on the part of African-Americans. For

example, in the work of Charles Hamilton Houston, we can see this quite clearly. In his *The Negro Solider* (1944: 320), Houston critiqued the schism found between American foreign and domestic policies: "The American color bar unless speedily removed will be the rock on which our international Good Neighbor policy and our pious claim to moral leadership will flounder."

Houston's point was that American leadership and power internationally was largely dependent upon the normative arguments underlying American foreign policy. The fact that African-Americans in America were treated so poorly directly contradicted American commitments to ending fascism and championing human rights. African-Americans took advantage of this contradiction by using it as a means to mobilize the African-American community to challenge racist practices.

The ability of African-Americans to mobilize not only relied upon the moral contradictions found in American commitments to World War II. Throughout the late 1940s, African-Americans began to have greater access to education, and their income (especially in the North) grew substantially (Marable 2007: 15). African-Americans also formed new organizations such as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) which staged sit-ins and boycotts both in the North and South to challenge segregated busing, lunch counters and schools (Marable 2007: 24). Politically, African-Americans also wielded a good deal of power at the local and state levels:

> "By 1946, there were over two dozen blacks who were serving in state legislatures in northeastern states (New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Vermont) in the Midwest (Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska), the West (California and Colorado) and even in border states (West Virginia and

> Kentucky). By 1947, 12 percent of all voting-age blacks in the South were registered, up from only 2 percent in 1940. Blacks in the upper South – Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee – began to be elected in small numbers to city councils and school board posts" (Marable 2007: 14).

By the late 1940s, African-Americans both in the South and the North had greater access to material resources and, (through their membership in labor unions and other organizations) participated in reforming the conditions of American economic life. The effect of increasing African-American political and economic power, coupled with their memberships in labor unions and other organizations provided a basis for resisting racial segregation in the North and South.

By the early 1950s, it seemed that African-Americans were poised to begin the transformation of American racial relations. They had access to resources, and they were increasingly becoming important politically. The problem was that the Cold War in American politics had generated a strong anti-communism movement within the U.S. Many scholars, labor leaders and other cultural elites were branded as "communists", undercutting the ability of African-Americans to use their organizational resources developed through their memberships in organized labor and other anti-segregation organizations such as CORE. African-American leaders such as A. Randolph Hearst and W.E.B. Du Bois were publicly branded as communists, making it more difficult for African-Americans to cultivate a movement to challenge racial segregation using their own elites. The fact that anti-communism restricted the power of organized labor and created a context in which critiquing American institutions was seen as anti-American

made it very difficult for African-Americans to continue to challenge the system of racial segregation that permeated American racial relations (Marable 2007:17-23).

By the mid-1950s, despite the strength of anti-communism in the U.S., changes were to occur that helped to reinvigorate African-American agitation for ending racial segregation. The most important institutional change was the U.S. Supreme Court's unanimous ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954). In *Brown*, the U.S. Supreme Court repudiated the ruling in *Plessy* which established the "separate but equal" doctrine by ruling that, "in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" (*Brown* 1954: 1380). The ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court that public education in America had to be desegregated was extremely important for it not only signaled a shift in how American political institutions were to treat African-Americans, but it also provided the impetus for Congressional action resulting in the Civil Rights Act of 1957 which sought to protect African-American voting rights in the South and to stop fraud in Southern electoral contests (Marable 2007: 39). With the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown* and the passage of the first civil rights legislation since Reconstruction, African-American agitation for political equality gained momentum.[69]

The second important event that was to galvanize African-American mobilization for ending racial segregation occurred in 1955 when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. The result of this fearless act sent shockwaves through the local and national community, and it precipitated the Montgomery Bus Boycott staged by local African-Americans. The boycott was the first

[69] White southerners did not readily accept the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court to desegregate schools, leading to conflicts between African-Americans and whites. A good example of such conflict occurred in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1956. See Marable 2007: 40-41.

real act of defiance to racial segregation by African-Americans in the South, and it was a success: it resulted in the desegregation of the bus system in Montgomery.

With the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Brown* and the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, the civil rights movement began in earnest. One of the ways that the civil rights movement was able to coalesce was through the creation of many organizations that helped to mobilize African-Americans to critique racial segregation in the South. These organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) were based upon a set of underlying normative principles that gave their activity moral force. These organizations embodied the egalitarian-transformative narrative that had been conceptually developed in the 19th century by Douglass, Washington, Du Bois and Garvey.

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)

Created by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1957, the SCLC was committed to moral principles that saw all human beings as of equal worth and value (1957: 392):

> "The basic tenets of the Hebraic-Christian tradition, coupled with the Gandhian concept of *satyagraha* – truth force – is at the heart of the SCLC's philosophy. Christian non-violence actively resists evil in any form. It never seeks to humiliate the opponent, only to win him. Suffering is accepted without retaliation. Internal violence of the spirit is as much to be rejected as external physical violence. At the center of nonviolence is redemptive love."

The SCLC's philosophy begins with the assumption that others are of equal worth and value since they are to be loved. The moral concept of "love" is crucial for understanding how SCLC was an organizational expression of the egalitarian-

transformative narrative: to love was to reject violence and destruction of others. Love also required seeking an end to oppressive conditions such as segregation due to the fact that segregation was the epitome of social relations based upon hate and violence. The emphasis on love therefore creates a conceptual foundation for seeking mutual reconciliation between individuals and developing social relations that are based on the inclusion of all persons since all people are deserving of equal regard and dignity.

The commitment of SCLC to love and non-violence can be seen especially in the work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In his *Nonviolence and Racial Justice* (1957), Dr. King advocated for the use of non-violence as a means to win over those who sought to oppress African-Americans. The use of non-violent tactics is critical for Dr. King, as they allow the oppressed to challenge the oppressor while also enabling the cultivation of love between both the oppressed and the oppressor (King Jr. 1957: 401-402). Conceptually, Dr. King develops his conception of love which he seeks to establish as the moral basis for non-violence (1957: 402-403):

> "In speaking of love…we are not referring to some sentimental emotion. It would be nonsense to urge men to love their oppressors in an affectionate sense. "Love" in this connection means understanding, good will. There are three words for love in the Greek New Testament. First, there is *eros*. In Platonic philosophy *eros* meant the yearning of the soul for the realm of the divine. It has come now to mean a sort of aesthetic or romantic love. Second, there is *philia*. It meant intimate affectionateness between friends. *Philia* denotes a sort of reciprocal love: the person loves because he is loved. When we speak of loving those who oppose us we refer to neither *eros* nor *philia*; we speak of a love which is

> expressed the Greek word *agape*. *Agape* means nothing sentimental or basically affectionate: it means understanding, redeeming good will for all men, and overflowing love which seeks nothing in return. It is the love of God working in the lives of men. When we love on the *agape* level we love men not because we like them, not because their attitudes and ways appeal to us, but because God loves them. Here we rise to the position of loving the person who does the evil deed while hating the deed he does" (402-403) (emphasis original).

For Dr. King, love as a moral and political concept meant developing social relations based upon a conception of the self and the other as being bonded together in mutual understanding and good will, even if those to whom we direct our love do not reciprocate. Love in King's sense becomes a powerful mechanism for establishing the value of non-violence because such tactics are underwritten by a morality that sees human relationships as (potentially) based upon a conception of equal regard. Through the use of non-violence and a commitment to love, King's argument suggests that human relationships can be transformed, even where such relationships are tainted by hate.

Beyond the commitment to love which is linked to non-violence, Dr. King also developed the idea that non-violence creates a source of tension and anxiety for the oppressor (1963: 222):

> "Nonviolent direction action seeks to create…a crisis and foster…tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks to so dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored…I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary

> to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood."

As King shows, non-violent tactics create tensions within communities that force those who oppress others to confront. The critical point is that through tension comes growth; recognition that in order to overcome the current tensions social relations between human beings must be changed. It is important to note that while Dr. King was instrumental in the development and use of non-violent tactics to create changes in American racial relations, particularly in the South, other organizations also pursued such tactics.

Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)

SNCC began as an off-shoot organization of the SCLC in 1960. Much like the SCLC, SNCC was committed to non-violence and the underlying conception of love which informed such tactics (1960: 395):

> "We affirm the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence as the foundation of our purpose, the pre-supposition of our faith, and the manner of our action. Nonviolence as it grows from Judaic-Christian traditions seeks a social order of justice permeated by love. Integration of human endeavor represents the crucial first step towards such a society. Through nonviolence, courage displaces fear; love transforms hate. Acceptance dissipates prejudice; hope ends despair. Peace dominates war; faith reconciles doubt. Mutual regard cancels enmity. Justice for

> all overthrows injustice. The redemptive community supersedes systems of gross social immorality. Love is the central motif of nonviolence. Love is the force by which God binds man to himself and man to man. Such love goes to the extreme; it remains loving and forgiving even in the midst of hostility. It matches the capacity of evil to inflict suffering with an even more enduring capacity to absorb evil, all the while persisting in love. By appealing to conscience and standing on the moral nature of human existence, nonviolence nurtures the atmosphere in which reconciliation and justice become actual possibilities."

Much like the argument pursued by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., SNCC advocates for nonviolence and the importance of love. The important point is to show how nonviolence and love can transform human practices and institutions to better approximate a more just and peaceful world. The statement also makes reference to the moral nature of human existence, which shows that human relations for those engaged in nonviolent agitation are (or at least ought to be) informed by a conception of equal regard for other human beings. As the statement suggests, mutual regard (which relies upon a conception of equal respect for its development) can help solve human conflict.

It is important to recognize that in the case of the SCLC and SNCC, the arguments surrounding non-violence and love flow from a religious foundation. As organizations, both the SCLC and SNCC relied heavily upon the African-American church for mobilization and the recruitment of leaders. Historically, the African-American church has been committed to the value orientations of both the SCLC and SNCC. Scholarship dealing with the African-American church emphasizes how the church has been instrumental in combating American racism by seeing such racism as a

"moral evil" that must be overcome, and by linking together African-Americans through an analogy of the church as a "family" that bonds African-Americans together as "brothers" and "sisters" in faith (Mattis 2001: 268-270).

The African-American church also provided a basis for African-American mobilization and self-help (Mattis 2001: 271-272):

> "As a focal point of African American political life, churches have been responsible for training and supporting local and national leaders, educating members of the African American community about political issues that directly affect them, and agitating on a national and international level for social justice. African American churches have responded to the needs of the African American community and to their religious responsibility by developing credit unions, providing jobs, housing, meals, educational programs, medical and mental health treatment, and a range of services for poor and marginalized community members. In effect, the black church has sought to address the quandary of double consciousness by humanizing America through programs that seek to dismantle injustice, by providing African Americans with concrete opportunities to reap the benefits of the advantages that "America" promises, and by providing African Americans with the skills needed to define themselves and control their own destinies."

Because of the role that the African-American church plays in helping African-Americans to develop their own communities, it is important to realize that the organizations which developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s to address racial segregation in the South were dependent upon the moral and material infrastructure that

the African-American church provided. In the absence of the African American church, it is likely that these organizations would not have developed, nor would they have had the profound impact that they did in transforming American racial relations.

Nationalist Movements

While the religiously-based SCLC and SNCC had enormous impacts on changing the racial segregation of the American South (Marable 2007: 63-79), it is important note the development of African-American nationalism in the early 1960s. The power of African-American nationalism, particularly through the establishment of the Nation of Islam, and the work of Malcolm X, drew upon African-American impatience with ending racial segregation and oppression. While SCLC and SNCC were engaging in non-violence and seeking integration of African-Americans and whites through "redeeming love", some African-Americans perceived integration to be synonymous with accommodation and capitulation to white political, social and economic institutions. African-American nationalism emphasized,

> "the rejection of racial integration; a desire to develop all black socio-economic institutions; an affinity for the cultural and political heritage of black Africa; a commitment to create all-black political structures to fight against white racism; a deep reluctance to participate in coalitions which involved a white majority; the advocacy of armed self-defense of the black community; and in religion and culture, an ethos and spirituality which consciously rejected the imposition of white western dogmas" (Marable 2007: 53).

The value of African-American nationalism flowed from its commitment to

ending white oppression and control through the establishment of uniquely African-American social practices and institutions. The emphasis was not on seeking to build relationships with sympathetic whites, nor trying to transform human relations through non-violence. Instead, the emphasis was on African-American self-assertion and desire to see "blackness" as signifying strength, beauty and power. The impact of the African-American nationalism movement was not felt until after 1965, but it began in the 1960-1965 period as a reaction against the more "mainstream" civil rights organizations of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

From 1960-1965, the civil rights movement gained momentum and their tactics brought about changes in racial relations in the South. Nationally, the impact of the civil rights movement culminated in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended segregation in all aspects of American life throughout the country, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 assured (in law at least) African-Americans in the South the right to vote.

> "Within five years, the effects of the Voting Rights Act were apparent to all. Between 1964 and 1969, the percentage of black adults registered to vote in the South soared: Alabama, 19.3 percent to 61.3 percent; Georgia, 27.4 percent to 60.4 percent; Louisiana, 31.6 percent to 60.8 percent; Mississippi 6.7 percent to 66.5 percent" (Marable 2007: 79).

The civil rights movement that began in 1955 had helped to create the conditions that enabled the passage of these two landmark pieces of civil rights legislation. In the post-1965 period, these achievements would be followed by others, as well as challenges

from within the civil rights movement that sought a greater sense of racial pride which was not a focal point of the early church-based civil rights organizations.

Conclusion: The Egalitarian-Transformative Racial Narrative and African-American Political Behavior

The central thesis of this chapter is that following Reconstruction through the civil rights movement of the early to mid-1960s, an egalitarian-transformative racial narrative was developed that sought to challenge the white supremacist racial narrative that dominated American politics from the earliest beginnings of the American polity through the U.S. Civil War. The focus of the egalitarian-transformative racial narrative centered on liberating African-Americans from their social, economic and political oppression in America. In so doing, it helped to transform African-American political behavior, allowing African-Americans to not only vote, but also develop organizations to pursue the goal of racial liberation.

The conceptual foundation of racial liberation was laid by the works of Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey. Their arguments surrounding the importance of integration, the development of African-American cultural norms and a strong sense of group self, and nationalism informed how African-Americans organized politically to (partially) achieve the goal of ending racial oppression in its political, economic and social manifestations. This can be seen especially as African-Americans began to agitate for their civil rights. The social movement that began in the mid-1950s rested upon the underlying moral concepts that had been developed by early African-American thinkers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. With a focus upon integration, and assimilation, the early civil rights movement used the

ideas implicit in the works of Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington, which emphasized African-American self-help and community development. While an emphasis on nationalism had begun during the early 1960s as a strong reaction to the perceived conciliation of the civil rights movement to white elites, the development of African-American nationalism would begin in earnest in the post-1965 era.

The egalitarian-transformative racial narrative that developed from 1865-1965 explains many aspects of African-American political behavior throughout this period of American history. It explains the moral foundations of the civil rights movement, and why the civil rights movement had much success in the early to mid-1960s. The civil rights movement had success because it used ideas, concepts and arguments that enabled actors to challenge long dominant patterns of interaction in American society premised upon white superiority. The civil rights movement also engaged with questions of assimilation and nationalism to build organizations that helped African-Americans to mobilize to achieve racial liberation. Finally, the civil rights movement was able to articulate an alternative plot about the role of African-Americans in U.S. society, and the contradictions that inhered in intergroup relations between whites and African-Americans. In the absence of such a racial narrative, it would have been much more difficult for African-Americans to build a social movement since the coherence provided by the conceptual foundations of early African-American thinkers would have been lacking.[70]

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[70] The evidence linking King's activities as well as those of SNCC to the egalitarian transformative narrative include emphases on ending racial oppression, seeking the development (and cultivation of) economically viable African-American communities, and a desire to use the collective power of the African-American community to dismantle those practices, norms and values which were premised upon the exclusion of African-Americans in American society. While King (and SNCC) depended upon other forms of thought (such as Ghandi's) to provide a moral basis for civil rights agitation, it is important to recognize that conceptual arguments of writers like Douglass and Washington enabled subsequent

As the mid-1960s came to a close, America was in midst of generating new institutions and social practices to dismantle racial segregation as well as African-American social, economic and political oppression. By 1965, new emphases were found in the civil rights movement that drew from the earlier work of African-American thinkers, particularly Marcus Garvey. We now turn to a discussion of American racial relations from 1965-2008 to see what changes occurred in American racial relations after the heyday of the church-based civil rights movement.

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generations of African-Americans to appropriate their arguments and wed them to alternative tactics that would prove useful in challenging white supremacy.

Chapter 5:
Nationalism, Solidarity and Backlash:
Establishing the Nationalist-Solidarist and Anti-Transformative Racial Narratives

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. First, the chapter will develop what has been termed a "nationalist-solidarist" (NS) narrative. This narrative emphasizes the need for African-Americans to come together as a group and form a unified organizational front against white supremacy and control in American social, political and economic life. The emphases of this narrative include: black power, black nationalism, and the desire for African-Americans to generate a powerful conception of collective identity rooted in the cultural and political values of what it means to be "black". An underlying theme unites the differences of those actors involved in generating the NS narrative. This theme is liberation. The focus on liberation shows that the egalitarian-transformative (ET) narrative of the 1865-1965 period and the NS narrative of the 1965-2008 period are conceptually linked, providing continuity. The major distinguishing feature of the NS narrative is the role that black power and black nationalism play in re-conceptualizing African-American liberation as the search for and development of a collective identity, and cultivating a pride in African-American social and political values as well as their institutional manifestations.

By the mid 1960s, another narrative became important in American racial relations: the anti-transformative narrative. While its intellectual foundations began in the 1950s, it was primarily based upon a strong reaction to the perceived excesses of the 1960s Civil Rights movement, as well as the emerging NS movements. This narrative stressed that American social, economic and political life ought to be informed by an egalitarian-conservatism that challenged the need for social programs to aid African-

Americans in achieving equal citizenship in the American polity.[71] Combining a libertarian emphasis on free-markets and the need for reduced governmental involvement in American capitalism with a procedural conception of equal opportunity, and a powerful belief in an underlying moral order to human relations, the anti-transformative narrative helped to re-orient American society away from pursuing racial equality to the detriment of African-Americans.

The complex interplay between the NS narrative and the anti-transformative narrative has had a lasting impact on American racial politics, and the degree to which African-Americans could participate fully in all aspects of American society. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how African-Americans have sought to continue to pursue racial equality in America based upon a commitment to solidarity in a context where such solidarity is seen by American society as contributing to factionalism at the expense of the "good" for all American citizens.[72]

What is a "Nationalist-Solidarist" Racial Narrative?

As elaborated in Chapter 1, the basic features of a NS narrative include:

1. A commitment to the exploration, development and institutionalization of African-American cultural beliefs and practices with the goal of cultivating a collective community identity.

[71] The anti-transformative narrative is (a) egalitarian in the sense that all individuals are assumed to be free to use their productive private property and equal in the sense that all individuals have the capacity to acquire property. It is also (b) conservative in the sense that it sees value in traditional practices, institutions and contains within it a conception of moral order underlying society. These two ideas will be further elaborated and linked together in the discussions below regarding libertarianism and conservative political thought.

[72] Solidarity among African-Americans is crucial for understanding post-1980 African-American political behavior, but the contours of this solidarity has been contested, especially by those actors from the civil rights movement who still see value in pursuing integration into American society. The complex interplay between solidarity and integration will be a central theme in this chapter.

2. A desire to acquire a sense of solidarity among all African-Americans based upon the beliefs and values that inform African-American collective community identity.
3. The creation of organizations which help African-Americans to seek solidarity and commitment from one another and to be engaged in collective political projects that promote what is unique and valuable to African-American's as a group.

The NS racial narrative's emphasis is primarily upon generating social, political and economic institutions (as well as practices) that create a sense of collective identity within the African-American community. That the articulation of a collective identity is the base of the NS narrative does not mean such a narrative is monolithic. The emphasis on collective identity is a realization among African-Americans that the "factions" within the broader movement for African-American social, political and economic equality need to cultivate a sense of group pride if the institutional and normative expressions of white supremacy are to be challenged and ultimately overcome.

Why did this narrative develop and blossom in the post-1965 era? As was shown in chapter 4, the ET narrative also contained elements emphasizing solidarity, racial self-help, and community self-determination. The post-1965 era proved pivotal for the emergence of the nationalist-solidarist narrative for several reasons.

First, despite the ending of de jure segregation in American housing, education and other forms of public accommodations, de facto segregation continued in many areas of American society, particularly in regards to residential segregation. Residential segregation of African-Americans and whites began early in the 20th Century, in the

urban cities of the North to which African-Americans migrated in large numbers. The rapid influx of African-Americans into predominantly white neighborhoods created racial tensions and violence. In order to deal with the migration of African-Americans into white residential areas, white property owners and realtors created such practices as restrictive covenants and "block-busting" schemes to not only limit African-American entrance into white neighborhoods, but also to facilitate white out-migration of the urban centers of northern cities to the suburbs (Massey and Denton 1993: 36-39; 45). The centralization of African-Americans into urban centers of the north created black ghettos that severely circumscribed labor and social mobility for African-Americans, facilitating the development of a black underclass that lacked the resources to pull themselves out of the ghetto (Clark 1965; Glascow 1980; Wilson 1987).

The ghettos of northern urban cities were destructive social environments characterized by high rates of intra-community violence, drug abuse, and the deterioration of the black family (Marable 2007: 91). By 1965, policymakers at the national level also recognized the problems associated with residential segregation, the development of black ghettos, and the extremely problematic consequences of such living conditions (Moynihan 1965). While their policy proposals such as Johnson's Great Society Programs may have improved ghetto life somewhat, they hardly eroded the poverty and lack of opportunity experienced by African-Americans in the ghettos (Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997: 234). The living conditions that African-Americans suffered in the ghettos created strong black unrest, resulting in urban riots throughout many American cities from 1965-1968 (Marable 2007: 90).

Accompanying residential segregation was the growing belief on the part of African-Americans that the changes wrought by the Civil Rights movement of the early 1960s – an end to de jure segregation, and the protection of African-American access to the ballot – while important, were insufficient to deal with the on-going economic hardships faced by many African-Americans. The problem was that while change had come, the daily life of African-Americans had not improved appreciably. Most African-Americans still struggled economically and were still subject to social ostracism and white racism. The needed changes – such as a commitment to providing African-Americans with economic resources to re-build their own communities – were advocated only hesitantly by white political elites. Despite President Johnson's commitments to African-American equality in American society, broad reforms in the American political economy were not forthcoming, leading some in the African-American community to doubt the sincerity of white liberals who advocated for racial equality in America.[73]

Finally, by the mid-1960s African-Americans had rising expectations brought on by the Civil Rights movement, but did not have the ability to pursue such higher expectations (Marable 2007: 91). The Civil Rights movement of the early 1960s had generated a strong sense of collective self-worth that had mobilized African-Americans to pursue political equality. The problem was that along with political equality, African-Americans were searching for greater economic resources and wanted to be able to participate socially in American society on a footing equal to their white counterparts.

[73] It is important to note that the African-American community was not completely committed to the use of governmental power to create public policies that would help achieve racial equality. Some, particularly within the African-American middle class did not agree with the types of social programs created in the early 1960s to deal with urban violence and poverty. For an overview, see Dawson 1994.

Political equality was not enough; African-Americans wanted to have access to economic and social resources to be effective wielders of political power.

The confluence of these three forces helps to explain the rise and prominence of the Black Nationalist and black power movements that emerged in the mid-1960s. Black nationalists and black power movements were able to articulate social and economic goals which promoted developing African-American communities economically, and helped to empower African-Americans to feel a sense of personal worth and value in being "black". The cumulative effect of the black nationalist and black power movements was to help organize the urban African-American poor to achieve economic prosperity and develop a sense of pride in one's own group and to create economic, social and political institutions to allow that pride to flourish.

Black Nationalism and Black Power

In order to understand black nationalism and black power, it is useful to see how African-American elites developed these programs for positive African-American social, political and economic action. The work of Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, and the community group The Black Panther Party (BPP) are excellent examples of Black Nationalist and Black power politics. The arguments these authors use provide a conceptual foundation for the emerging nationalist-solidarist narrative.

Malcolm X

Malcolm X's political importance began after was released from prison in 1952. After his release, he began to work extensively with the Nation of Islam, and he idolized Elijah Mohammed. He internalized much of the Nation of Islam's teachings, and eventually he became a minister of Temple Number Seven in New York City. There,

Malcolm pursued the teachings of Elijah Mohammed with passion. In particular, Malcolm articulated that whites were the enemy of African-Americans and that the white man had, since time immemorial, tried to destroy the culture and values of African-Americans. For Malcolm X, the Nation of Islam was the only way for African-Americans to reinvigorate and elaborate their own cultural heritage and develop an identity separate from the influence of white America. In his *Autobiography* (1964a) Malcolm X recounts one of his sermons, demonstrating the Nation of Islam's belief that the white man hated African-Americans and that African-Americans ought to recognize such hatred as a source of their economic deprivation (1964a: 220):

> "Brothers and sisters, the white man has brainwashed us black people to fasten our gaze upon a blond-haired, blue-eyed Jesus! We're worshipping a Jesus that doesn't even *look* like us!...The white man has taught us to shout and sing and pray until we *die*, to wait until *death*, for some dreamy heaven-in-the-hereafter, when we're *dead*, while this white man has his milk and honey in the streets paved with golden dollars right here on this earth! You don't want to believe what I am telling you, brothers and sisters? Well, I'll tell you what to do. You go out of here, you just take a good look around where you live. Look at not only how *you* live, but look at how anybody that you *know* lives – that way, you'll be sure that you're not just a bad luck accident. And when you get through looking at where *you* live, then you take you a walk down across Central Park, and start to look at what this white God has brought to the white man. I mean, take yourself a look down there at how the white man is living!"

Malcolm X linked the economic exploitation of African-Americans to the desire

on the part of whites to demoralize them; to have them believe in a God whose physical attributes validated the worth of the white and denigrated African-Americans. For Malcolm X, the Nation of Islam offered to African-Americans the truth about their current plight: that the white man sought to use religion to pacify African-Americans to accept their current condition instead of rejecting their oppression.

Malcolm X's sermons articulated a social program of African-American self-worth and empowerment. In the face of white control and power, Malcolm X argued that African-Americans were valuable and that through a commitment to the teachings of Elijah Mohammed and the Nation of Islam, African-Americans would be able to exert power within their own communities. For Malcolm X, African-Americans had to realize that the white man created their oppression and through this realization, they could regain a sense of community and identity as African-Americans. The critical edge of Malcolm X's ideas centered on making known white oppression and how such oppression had infiltrated the African-American community and made difficult the ability of African-Americans to change their current condition.

Despite the positive social and economic program that was at the foundation of Malcolm X's and the Nation of Islam's teachings, many interpreted such teachings as white hatred or "black racism". A good example of this comes from a documentary that was done dealing with the Nation of Islam for the Mike Wallace Show. In 1959, the documentary aired with the title, "The Hate that Hate Produced". The public reaction was predictable, at least to Malcolm X (1964a: 239):

> "Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers, black and white, were exclaiming "Did you hear it? Did you see it? Preaching *hate* of white people!" Here was one

> of the white man's most characteristic behavior patterns – where black men are concerned. He loves himself so much that he is startled if he discovers that his victims don't share his vainglorious self-opinion. In America for centuries it had been just fine as long as the victimized, brutalized and exploited black people had been grinning and begging and "Yessa Massa" and Uncle Tomming. But now, things were different. First came the white newspapers – feature writers and columnists: "Alarming"… "hate-messengers" … "threat to the good relations between the races" … "black segregationists" … "black supremacists," and the like. And the newspapers' ink wasn't dry before the big national weekly news magazines started: "Hate-teachers" … "violence-seekers" … "black racists" … "black fascists"… "anti-Christian" … "possibly Communist-inspired…."

The response of white America was one of shock: how could African-Americans preach hate, especially when they were seeking greater access in American society? From white America's perspective, Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam sought to destroy American society through inciting racial violence. More telling though was the response of other African-American leaders at the time.

Most other African-American leaders denounced the Nation of Islam, suggesting that in no way did the Nation of Islam represent African-Americans as a group. Malcolm X interpreted such a response as evidence that many mainstream African-American leaders were the modern equivalent of "house negroes": those who were willing to capitulate to their white masters' desires for "scraps" from his table (Malcolm X 1964a: 239). Malcolm X even went so far as to depict mainstream African-American leaders as "puppets" of the white man. The reaction of mainstream African-American leaders

revealed a deep rift between their understandings of how to achieve African-American power and the program advocated by Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam.[74]

Despite the animosities generated through the documentary, the effect was to catapult Malcolm X to an "official spokesman" of the Nation of Islam. Throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, Malcolm X's thought followed closely to the principles of the Nation of Islam. By 1963, Malcolm X's thought and relationship to the Nation of Islam would undergo changes.

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. The shock of the assassination was profound for many Americans. Malcolm X's response to the assassination would leave him publicly censured by Elijah Mohammed. In a speech he gave directly following the march on Washington in 1963 by Civil Rights leaders, he publicly condemned the march as a form of appeasement orchestrated by President Kennedy to "quiet" African-Americans who were seeking greater reforms and changes in American society. After the speech, Malcolm X, when asked by a reporter what he thought of Kennedy's assassination said that the "chickens had come home to roost": essentially arguing that white violence against African-Americans had finally been re-directed at whites themselves (Malcolm X 1964a: 301;Wright 2009: 535). The comment was controversial, and because of it, the Nation of Islam and Elijah Mohammed publicly rebuked Malcolm's comment and forbade him to speak publicly.

Adding to the public censure was a scandal pertaining to Elijah Mohammed fathering children out of wedlock that disillusioned Malcolm X about the leader he had so fervently idolized. By 1964, Malcolm began to transition away from the Nation of Islam as his organizational base that he could use to develop and spread his ideas. While his

[74] This rift will be more fully explained below with a discussion of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s thought.

thought in 1964-1965 still retained a basis in the ideas of the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X began to speak about the need for African-Americans to rise up and take the power that they so deserved.

In his many public statements and speeches throughout the last year of his life, Malcolm X developed his political, social and economic program for blacks based upon the tenets of black nationalism. A good example of this comes from his public announcement in the middle of 1964 that he was breaking away from the Nation of Islam and forming his own organization, the Muslim Mosque Inc (1964b: 22):

> "Our political philosophy will be black nationalism. Our economic and social philosophy will be black nationalism. Our cultural emphasis will be black nationalism…The political philosophy of black nationalism means: we must control the politics and the politicians of our community. They must no longer take orders from outside forces. We will organize, and sweep out of office all Negro politicians who are puppets for outside forces."

Malcolm X stressed that political power needed to be in the hands of African-Americans if they were to be able to achieve justice in American society. Because of Malcolm X's commitment to communal control over political power, he also advocated for racial unity among African-Americans (Malcolm X 1964b: 21). Such unity would provide African-Americans a base with which to exert collective control in the face of white supremacy.[75] Malcolm X's desire for African-American unity led him to establish the Organization of African-American Unity (OAAU) in 1964. The OAAU's statement

[75] The problem is that Malcolm X's call for unity had difficulty finding traction with those leaders and groups who still believed in integration as the means to garner political, economic and social power in American society. Effectively, Malcolm X's call for unity applied to a narrow base committed to black nationalist ideas, but Malcolm X (at least at this point in his political activism) truly believed that such unity could be created despite differences within the African-American community.

of purpose was based upon several of the ideas of black nationalism, including a right of African-Americans to have control over their own community institutions, the right for self-defense, a desire to come to a better understanding of what it meant to be "black", and the need to generate an international coalition among all oppressed people of color (Statement of OAAU 2000: 437-441). The establishment of the OAAU shows that the ideas and arguments of black nationalism (as manifested in the thought of Malcolm X) provided an impetus for establishing African-American organizations that could unite African-Americans based upon their unique social, political and cultural heritage.

We can see him further develop his new ideas in a speech he gave in the spring of 1964 entitled *The Ballot or the Bullet*. In this speech, Malcolm X further elaborated upon the need for collective action based on a communal experience of white oppression (1964c: 24):

> "I'm not here to argue or discuss anything that we differ about, because it's time for us to submerge our differences and realize that it is best for us to first see that we have the same problem, a common problem…All of use have suffered here, in this country, political oppression at the hands of the white man, economic exploitation at the hands of the white man, and social degradation at the hands of the white man."

Malcolm's thinking has shifted: he now sees the need for coalitions between different elements of the African-American community. While he retains the same criticism of the white man in America, he wants to create a broad movement based upon the values of Black Nationalism that will serve the interests of all African-Americans (1964c: 39):

> "Black people are fed up with the dillydallying, pussyfooting, compromising approach that we've been using toward getting our freedom. We want freedom *now*, but we're not going to get it by saying "We Shall Overcome". We've got to fight until we overcome. The economic philosophy of black nationalism is pure and simple. It only means that we should control the economy of our community…So the economic philosophy of black nationalism means in every church, in every civic organization, in every fraternal order, it's time now for our people to become conscious of the importance of controlling the economy of our community. If we own the stores, if we operate the businesses, if we try and establish some industry in our own community, then we're developing to the position where we are creating employment for our own kind…The social philosophy of black nationalism only means that we have to get together and remove the evils, the vices, alcoholism, drug addition, and other evils that are destroying the moral fiber of our community. We ourselves have to lift the level of our community, the standard of our community to a higher level, make our own society beautiful."

Malcolm X requires that African-Americans unify around black nationalist principles and reject those movements or leaders who seek to work within white society and its institutions. The fact that Malcolm X begins to see the need for coalitions to ultimately change American society is immensely important, even if his conception of coalition-building revolves around the pursuit of a particular social, economic and political agenda.

For Malcolm X, African-Americans have to be committed to using a variety of tactics (both non-violent and violent) to pursue a collective racial identity (based upon African-American institutions) in America. While Malcolm X does not advocate offensive violence towards others, he does advocate for African-Americans to defend themselves against white aggression. The point of emphasizing tactics is that Malcolm X does see a role for defensive violence as a means to empower African-Americans and to protect them. As the title of his speech suggests, Malcolm X sees the use of institutional mechanisms for change as potentially powerful ("the ballot"), but if this won't work, African-Americans might need to use defensive violence to achieve their goals ("the bullet").

Another change also occurs in Malcolm X's thought after he visits the Middle East in 1964 to complete his haij, a holy trek which is required of all Muslims. While in the Middle East, he encounters a completely different racial environment which has a profound impact on his thinking (1964d: 59-60):

> "Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and the overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practiced by people *of all colors and races* here in this ancient holy land, the home of Abraham, Muhammad and all the other prophets of the Holy Scriptures. For the past week I have been utterly speechless and spellbound by the graciousness I see displayed all around me by people *of all colors*…True Islam removes racism, because people of all colors and races who accept its religious principles and bow down to the one God, Allah, also automatically accept each other as brothers and sisters, regardless of differences in complexion…If Islam can place the spirit of true brotherhood in the hearts of

> the "whites" whom I have met here in the Land of the Prophets, then surely it can also remove the "cancer of racism" from the heart of the white American, and perhaps in time to save American from imminent racial disaster" (emphasis original).

In his travels, Malcolm X experienced racial harmony on an unprecedented level. This experience had the effect of shifting Malcolm X's thought to an emphasis on human rights as opposed to seeking civil rights within an American context. Malcolm X's thought, after his travels abroad, became more international and focused not simply on the plight of African-Americans and their domestic rights, but the rights of all people of color (1964e: 52):

> "The difference between the thinking and the scope of the Negroes who are involved in the human-rights struggle and those who are involved in the civil-rights struggle is that those so-called Negroes involved in the human-rights struggle don't look upon themselves as Americans. They look upon themselves as a part of dark mankind. They see the whole struggle not within the confines of the American stage, but they look upon the struggle on the world stage. And, in the world context, they see that the dark man outnumbers the white man. On the world stage the white man is just a microscopic minority. So in this country you find two different types of Afro-Americans – the type who looks upon himself as a minority and [whites] as the majority, because his scope is limited to the American scene; and then you have the type who looks upon himself as part of the majority and [whites] as part of a microscopic minority. And this one uses a different approach in trying to struggle for his rights. He doesn't beg. He doesn't

> thank [whites] for what [they] give him, because [whites] are only giving him what he should have had a hundred years ago. He doesn't think [whites] are doing him any favors."

While Malcolm X does retain a strong and deep criticism of white America, his emphasis is broader than just American racial relations; he sees people of color pursuing their "god-given" rights as human beings as the next stage in the movement toward African-American liberation, which mirrors his earlier conception of African-American unity. The importance of his shift to "human rights" allows Malcolm X to argue that African-Americans share affinities with their brothers and sisters throughout the world, generating the (potential) foundation for an international movement based upon the doctrine of equal rights for all peoples of color.

Tragically, while Malcolm X was trying to pursue his new agenda, he was assassinated in February of 1965 while delivering a speech in New York City. The impact on the African-American community at losing him was profound. As one scholar notes:

> "Dead at the age of 39, Malcolm quickly became the fountainhead of the modern renaissance of black nationalism in the late 1960s. His autobiography and published speeches were widely read; even millions of white radicals grew to respect and honor Malcolm's legacy. Black nationalist groups with very divergent political and economic programs all referred to Malcolm as their theoretical touchstone. Even among his bitterest opponents, Malcolm evoked a kind of grudging respect" (Marable 2007: 90).

How did other groups advocating for Black Nationalism build upon Malcolm X's

programs of political, economic and social equality for African-Americans? One group, the Black Panther Party, and another important activist, Stokely Carmichael, were to prove pivotal at continuing the ideas of Black Nationalism formulated by Malcolm X.

The Black Panther Party

Formed in the middle to late 1960s by Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton in Oakland, California, the Black Panther Party was based explicitly upon the underlying values and assumptions of black nationalism. In October of 1966 the group published their ten-point plan which outlined the program that the Black Panther Party was seeking to achieve. In Seale's book *Seize the Time: The Story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton* (1991), the ten-point plan is described in some detail. The ten-points need to be elaborated to show the underlying assumptions of black nationalism that informed their platform as a political entity (1991:66-68):

"*1. We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black Community.*

2. We want full employment for our people.

3. We want an end to the robbery by the white man of our Black Community.

4. We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings.

5. We want education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society.

6. We want all black men to be exempt from military service.

7. We want an immediate end to POLICE BRUTALITY and MURDER of black people.

8. We want freedom for all black men held in federal, state, county and city prisons and jails.

9. We want all black people when brought to trial to be tried in court by a jury of their peer group or people from their black communities, as defined by the Constitution of the United States.

10. We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace. And as our major political objective, a United Nations-supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the black colony in which only black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate, for the purpose of determining the will of black people as to their national destiny."[76]

The Black Panther Party's ten-point platform shows that they were committed to basic assumptions that link their program with that of black nationalism. All of the ten points emphasize the power and independence of the African-American community, and the degree to which its members should be able to collectively determine the community's future. This, much like with Malcolm X, is then linked to an economic program of local ownership, employment and control of community businesses. Point 5 is especially important for the Black Panther Party because through education African-Americans can come to a realization of what it means to be "black": "We believe in an educational system that will give to our people knowledge of self. If a man does not have knowledge of himself and his position in society and in the world, then he has little chance to relate to anything else" (Seale 1991: 67). The point is that through education, African-Americans can come to a realization of their own history, and by extension, how

[76] Unfortunately, the concept of a "black colony" is not elaborated or defined. The implication of using this term is that the Black Panthers saw the need for political independence potentially through the development of an African-American political community.

they can change their position in American society given the constraints imposed by their own history. The Black Panther Party is advocating for something akin to: "knowledge is power"; they see the role of gaining knowledge about black people and the community as a prerequisite for being able to change the current distribution of power in American society. Point 7 is also important for the Black Panther Party as they seek (much like with Malcolm X) the ability for African-Americans to defend their own communities through violence if necessary. The point is not to advocate for indiscriminate violence. Instead, the Black Panthers see a relationship between self-defense and the development of powerful African-American communities: through self-defense, African-Americans can not only protect what is theirs, but also cultivate a sense of collective control over violence within their own communities. The commitment to self-defense is crucial for understanding the programs that the Black Panther Party wished to develop. In order for African-Americans to retain ownership of their community institutions, they had to be ready to fight those that oppressed them.

The emphasis on self-defense through the ownership of weapons became a basis for developing a more radical program that drew from the writings of such authors as Marx, Lenin and Che Guevara, that advocated (to varying degrees) armed struggle against oppression (Courtright 1974: 252). The Black Panthers directly linked the oppression of African-Americans to capitalism, helping them to forge a class-based account of oppression that was linked to the specific social, political and economic problems facing African-Americans.[77] The central argument was that armed struggle would be the primary means by which to end capitalist exploitation (and the racism embedded in capitalist institutions). The Black Panthers were advocates not only of

[77] For modern expressions of this argument, see Marable 1983; West 1988.

ending African-American oppression, but also class-based oppression, and they saw these two as intricately linked (Seale 1991: 83):

> "We knew that at first the guns would be more valuable and more meaningful to the brothers on the block, for drawing them into the organization; then in turn we taught them from the Red Book.[78] Huey was something else. Huey was out of sight. He knew how to do it. Huey was ten motherfuckers. He would say, "Bobby, you and I know the principles in this Red Book are valid, but the brothers and the black folks don't, and they will not pay the dollar or thirty cents for that book. So what we have to do is to get the white radicals who are intellectually interested in the book, sell the book, make the money, buy the guns, and go on the streets with the guns. We'll protect a mother, protect a brother, and protect the community from the racist cops. And in turn we get brothers in the organization and they will in turn relate to the Red Book. They will relate to political, economic, and social equality in defense of the community.""

For the Black Panthers, the values found in the works of Communist thinkers, that stressed the ending of economic exploitation through a class-based movement, were wedded to a conception of black nationalism. The African-American community could be controlled by African-Americans themselves, but only through armed struggle to end wider forms of oppression based upon what the Black Panthers termed, "the power structure" (Seale 1991: 70-71):

> "What the Black Panther Party has done in essence is to call for an alliance and coalition with all of the people and organizations who want to move against the power structure. It is the power structure who are the pigs and hogs, who have

[78] Seale is referencing Chairman Mao's sayings.

been robbing the people; the avaricious, demagogic ruling-class elite who move the pigs upon our heads and who order them to do so as a means of maintaining their same old exploitation. In the days of worldwide capitalistic imperialism, with that imperialism also manifested right here in America against many different peoples, we find it necessary, as human beings, to oppose misconceptions of the day, like integration. If people want to integrate – and I'm assuming they will fifty or 100 years from now – that's their business. But right now we have the problem of a ruling-class system that perpetuates racism and uses racism as a key to maintain its capitalistic exploitation. They use blacks, especially the blacks who come out of the colleges and the elite class system, because these blacks have a tendency to flock toward a black racism which is parallel to the racism the Ku Klux Klan or white citizens groups practice. It is obvious that trying to fight fire with fire means there's going to be a lot of burning. The best way to fight fire is with water because water douses the fire. The water is the solidarity of the people's right to defend themselves together in opposition to a vicious monster. Whatever is good for the man[79] can't be good for us. Whatever is good for the capitalistic ruling-class system can't be good for the masses of the people. We, the Black Panther Party, see ourselves as a nation within a nation, but not for any racist reasons. We see it as a necessity for us to progress as human beings and live on the face of this earth along with other people. We do not fight racism with racism. We fight racism with solidarity. We do not fight exploitative capitalism with black capitalism. We fight capitalism

[79] Seale's use of the term "the man" is meant to reference those individuals, groups and coalitions who control and maintain positions of power within government, society and the capitalist political economy.

with basic socialism. And we do not fight imperialism with more imperialism. We fight imperialism with proletarian internationalism."

The Black Panthers see themselves not as a race-based movement, but as a movement to end wider forms of oppression, including class-based exploitation. The Panthers believe that pursuing socialism, understood here as a system of worker ownership and a broad distribution of valued social goods based upon need, will be the institutional foundation for ending economic exploitation and empowering African-Americans economically. The Panthers, through their emphasis on class and race, develop a complex criticism of American society that appeals to the poor in African-American community, but also other poor groups inhabiting different ethnic and racial categories.[80] The universalism found in Marxism based upon class exploitation under capitalism is linked to the specificity of African-American oppression under a system that is also racist in nature. The underlying argument developed by the Panthers indicates that American society is not only stratified by class, but also by race, and how these two social categories intersect with one another to form a system of exploitation. The argument proves to be a powerful mobilizing force for African-Americans, as throughout the late 1960s and into the 1970s, the Black Panther Party garners not only new members, but new organizational hubs in other American cities such as Chicago and Philadelphia.

The organizing potential of the Black Panthers draws from their emphases on Marxism, black nationalism, and self-defense. As the Black Panther Party gained momentum, other activists and organizations present in America focused upon the

[80] The emphasis made about the Panther's appealing to the poor is crucial, for the Panthers transform Marxist thought by suggesting that the lumpenproletariat could be the basis for large scale revolutionary activities. See Ogbar 2004: 94-100.

normative underpinnings of African-American unity, and began to pursue a politics based upon giving African-Americans power.

Black Power

By the middle to late 1960s, many activists within traditional civil rights organizations became disenchanted with the use of nonviolent protest and seeking coalitions with white liberals to pursue institutional reform. One such activist, Stokely Carmichael, who became the leader of SNCC in 1966 developed a slogan while protesting in the South that would prove to be powerful: "Black Power"! The foundations of this slogan are developed by Carmichael in his *What We Want* (1966). In this writing, Carmichael describes how his work in the early 1960s Civil Rights movement in the South made him realize that African-Americans needed to acquire power in order to change their plight. According to Carmichael, African-Americans have lacked power because of their poverty and their "blackness" (1966: 443):

> "Black power can be clearly defined for those who do not attach the fears of white America to their questions about it. We should begin with the basic fact that black Americans have two problems: they are poor and they are black. All other problems arise from this two-sided reality: lack of education, the so-called apathy of black men. Any program to end racism must address itself to that double reality."

The fact that African-Americans live in a "double reality" indicates that they are exploited economically, but that this exploitation is linked to wider forms of racism endemic to American society. To address this "double reality", the acquisition of power is crucial for liberating African-Americans (1966: 444):

> "We [SNCC] had to work for power, because this country does not function by morality, love, and nonviolence, but by power. Thus we determined to win political power, with the idea of moving on from there into activity that would have economic effects. With power, the masses could *make or participate in making* the decisions which govern their destinies, and thus create basic change in their day-to-day lives" (emphasis original).

Carmichael, much like Malcolm X and the Black Panthers, sees the necessity of acquiring power to facilitate the development of the African-American community.[81] A commitment to black power can be a basis for developing a sense of group solidarity and racial identity (1967: 66):

> "The adoption of the concept of Black Power is one of the most legitimate and healthy developments in American politics and race relations in our time…It is a call for black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community. It is a call for black people to begin to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations and to support those organizations. It is a call to reject the racist institutions and values of this [American] society. The concept of Black Power rests on a fundamental premise: *Before a group can enter the open society, it must first close ranks*. By this we mean that group solidarity is necessary before a group can operate effectively from a bargaining position of strength in a pluralistic society" (emphasis original).[82]

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[81] Malcolm X, the Black Panthers and Carmichael believe in pursuing economic, political and social power in order to pursue African-American group interests with the end goal being the cultivation a collective racial group identity fostered by generating African-American organizations and institutions.

[82] Solidarity is a group resource in the sense that the development of shared goals, aspirations and values can be the basis for defining collective goals and pursuing them. It is a resource that other groups in a pluralistic society have access to, but it is especially important for groups whose access to political and economic resources such as elected office or wealth is attenuated.

Black power, from this perspective, is not simply a "slogan" meant to incite African-American violence against whites, but is a social, political and economic program based upon the development of African-American empowerment to participate in the functioning and decision-making of their own communities (1967: 47):

> "Black Power recognizes – it must recognize – the ethnic basis of American politics as well as the power-oriented nature of American politics. Black Power therefore calls for black people to consolidate behind their own, so that they can bargain from a position of strength. But while we endorse the *procedure* of group solidarity and identity for the purpose of attaining certain goals in the body politic, this does not mean that black people should strive for the same kind of rewards (i.e., end results) obtained by the white society. The ultimate values and goals are not domination or exploitation of other groups, but rather an effective share in the total power of the society…The goal of black self-determination and black self-identity – Black Power – is full participation in the decision-making processes affecting the lives of black people, and recognition of the virtues in themselves as black people."

The import of emphasizing African-American self-determination and the development of a strong in-group social identity is that in order for African-Americans to be powerful, they must feel powerful. An emphasis on black power generates this feeling of power, primarily by focusing upon the uniqueness and value of African-Americans as a group with particular norms and practices that inform African-American group consciousness. The practical effect of emphasizing black power is to have African-Americans run organizations and pursue their own equality and freedom without the help

of whites. This exclusion of whites is not meant to be racist, but is done to help African-Americans develop their own organizational skills and capacities which in turn helps African-Americans to develop solidarity and create a strong in-group racial identity. Excluding whites empowers African-Americans to be the wielders of power and to be free from constraints imposed on group activity through the inclusion of sympathetic whites (1966: 446):

> "To most whites, black power seems to mean that Mau Mau are coming to the suburbs at night. The Mau Mau are coming, and whites must stop them. Articles appear about plots to "get Whitey," creating an atmosphere in which "law and order must be maintained." Once again, responsibility is shifted from the oppressor to the oppressed. Other whites chide, "Don't forget – you're only 10 percent of the population; if you get too smart, we'll wipe you out." If they are liberals, they complain, "what about me? – don't you want my help any more?" These are people supposedly concerned about black Americans, but today they think first of themselves, of their feelings of rejection."

For Carmichael, it is not that the black power movement is anti-white. Instead, it is pro-African-American (1966: 447):

> "Only black people can convey the revolutionary idea that black people are able to do things for themselves. Only they can help create in the community an aroused and continuing black consciousness that will provide the basis for political strength. In the past, white allies have furthered white supremacy without the whites involved realizing it – or wanting it, I think. Black people must do things for themselves; they must get poverty money they will control and spend

> themselves, they must conduct tutorial programs themselves so that black children identify with black people…This does not mean we don't welcome help, or friends. But we want the right to decide whether anyone is, in fact, our friend…Black people do not want to "take over" this country. They don't want to "get whitey"; they just want to get him off their backs, as the saying goes. The white man is irrelevant to blacks, except as an oppressive force. Blacks want to be in his place, yes, but not in order to terrorize and lynch and starve him. They want to be in his place because that is where a decent life can be had."

Carmichael is not advocating for the destruction of American society, nor is he arguing that African-Americans ought to take power from white Americans. Carmichael is advocating for African-American agency in pursuing power. Once such agency can be established, Carmichael seems to leave open the question as to whether whites can be involved in the movement. Therefore, black power is not "black racism" or "racism-in-reverse". To suggest this is to neglect to understand the role that African-Americans ought play in developing their own institutions and practices, and the ontological significance of these activities in generating a conception of what it means to be African-American.

By 1967, all of the movements described above were in full swing. The Black Panther Party and the black power movement became forces to mobilize African-Americans to engage in the building of common institutions. Despite the popularity of these movements, questions surrounding the tactics used for acquiring African-American access to political, social and economic power as well as the inclusion of sympathetic whites came to the fore. These issues were brought up by old guard Civil Rights leaders

such as Bayard Rustin and Martin Luther King Jr. In order to fully understand the implications of black nationalism and black power, it is important to see how their programs and substantive agendas were interpreted by Civil Rights leaders that were still committed to non-violence, integration, and coalitional politics with whites.

Critiquing Black Nationalism and Black Power

One critique that was leveled at the black nationalism and black power movements came from Bayard Rustin, a long time organizer in the early years of the Civil Rights movement. In his *"Black Power" and Coalition Politics* (1966), Rustin argued that black power had created rifts within the larger African-American movement for liberation that he then linked to his larger critique of black power: it lacked a substantive foundation and was downright harmful to the larger process of African-Americans seeking liberation from white control (1966: 453). He understands the draw of the black power movement, particularly because of the lack of economic opportunity in Southern and Northern African-American communities, but he suggests that black power is ultimately an alienating force in African-American liberation politics (1966: 457):

> "It is, in short, the growing conviction that the Negroes cannot win – a conviction with much grounding in experience – which accounts for the new popularity of "black power". So far as the ghetto Negro is concerned, this conviction expresses itself in hostility first toward the people closest to him who have held out the most promise and failed to deliver (Martin Luther King, Roy Wilkins, etc.), then toward those who have proclaimed themselves his friends (the liberals and the labor movement), and finally toward the only oppressors he can see (the local

> storekeeper and policeman on the corner). On the leadership level, the conviction that Negroes cannot win takes other forms, principally the adoption of what I have called a "no-win" policy. Why bother with programs when their enactment results only in a "sham"?"

Rustin's argument indicates that a commitment to black power is ultimately self-defeating because it sees institutional change as too slow, and it rejects the creation of substantive programs to ameliorate the plight of everyday African-Americans. Rustin also points to another problem with black power: it creates a sense within the African-American community that the only way to deal with social, political and economic inequality is to strike out at those who are either seen as oppressors or who fail to live up to their promises of social, economic and political change.

For Rustin, an emphasis on black power ignores the need to generate coalitions with other groups in society to create real, substantive change in how American institutions and society works (1966: 455):

> "Proponents of "black power" – accepting a historical myth perpetrated by moderates – like to say that the Irish and the Jews and the Italians, by sticking ogether and demanding their share, finally won enough power to overcome their initial disabilities. But the truth is that it was through alliances with other groups (in political machines or as part of the trade-union movement) that the Irish and the Jews and the Italians acquired the power to win their rightful place in society. They did not "pull themselves up by their own bootstraps" – no group in American society has ever done so."

Rustin is arguing that African-Americans have to form coalitions with other

groups in society in order to create change and garner power. He understands that in the absence of such coalitions, isolation is the ultimate result, and the types of changes needed for African-Americans to have their rights protected in American society will not materialize. Rustin does recognize the problems associated with having whites in the civil rights movement – they are given more value by society or the press when they are hurt, they seek to take over leadership positions within movement organizations – but he ultimately decides that whites will likely have to be included in the movement, although potentially on different terms than when they first entered the movement in the early 1960s (Rustin 1966: 457). For Rustin, American politics is coalition politics and African-Americans have to recognize this fact and use coalition partners to help achieve African-American liberation (Rustin 1966: 457).

Rustin's arguments amount to a deep critique of black power, but also a recognition that the lives of African-Americans have not necessarily appreciably changed even with major legislation at the national level designed to allow African-Americans to vote and have greater social and economic opportunities. The lack of perceived real change on the part of African-Americans helps to explain why the call for black power resonates with African-Americans, but ultimately Rustin rejects it as a basis for extending the civil rights agenda to deal with questions of poverty and white racism.

Martin Luther King Jr., in his *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (1967), shares with Rustin a commitment to rejecting black power as a basis for a post-1965 civil rights movement. He does so for a variety of reasons, but it is important to note that King, like Rustin, understands African-American frustration at the lack of economic opportunity and social justice. He states that such frustration flows

from a shift in phases within the civil rights movement and a lack of support by whites for such phase shifts (1967: 3-4):

> "With Selma and the Voting Rights Act one phase of development in the civil rights revolution came to an end. A new phase had opened, but few observers realized it or were prepared for its implications. For the vast majority of white Americans, the past decade – the first phase – had been a struggle to treat the Negro with a degree of decency, not of equality. White America was ready to demand that the Negro should be spared the lash of brutality and coarse degradation, but it had never been truly committed to helping him out of poverty, exploitation or all forms of discrimination…When Negroes looked for the second phase, the realization of equality, they found that many of their white allies had quietly disappeared. The Negroes of America had taken the President, the press and the pulpit at their word when they spoke in broad terms of freedom and justice. But the absence of brutality and unregenerate evil is not the presence of justice. To stay murder is not the same thing as to ordain brotherhood. The word was broken, and the free-running expectations of the Negro crashed into the stone walls of white resistance."

King sees that African-Americans are continuing to suffer despite all that the early 1960s civil rights movement had accomplished. While the lack of real change for many African-Americans left them feeling angry, King suggested that it was not only white resistance to African-American equality that created such anger. It was also the structural inequalities built into the American political economy that forced African-Americans into low-paying, low-skill work helping to create poverty and the inability to

economically flourish (King 1967: 7). Structural constraints and white resistance had helped to create anger and resentment in African-Americans, leading them to seek an alternative set of concepts to vent their anger such as black power.

Finally, King also recognizes that a source of African-American anger, particularly in the northern cities, was a result of a miscalculation on the part of the early civil rights movement (1967: 19):

> "Civil rights leaders had long thought the North would benefit derivatively from the Southern struggle. They assumed that without massive upheavals certain systemic changes were inevitable as the whole nation re-examined and searched its conscience. This was a miscalculation. It was founded on the belief that opposition in the North was not intransigent, that is was flexible and was, if not fully, at least partially hospitable to corrective influences. We forgot what we knew daily in the South: freedom is not given, it is won."

The Southern civil rights movement, which had been so successful, had ignored the growing plight of African-Americans in urban Northern cities, leading to feelings of resentment and abandonment. The fact that Northern African-Americans did not fully participate in the Southern civil rights movement leads King to suggest that their inclusion is needed to deal with the economic deprivation and white racism that leads many African-Americans to chant, "black power"!

While King, like Rustin, sees the black power movement as a result of African-American frustration and disappointment with the pace and types of changes in American society regarding African-American liberation, King also sees positive aspects of black power in its calls for African-Americans to seek legitimate power – where power is

constrained by both love and justice – and for African-Americans to develop "manhood" based on a desire to see value in being "black" (1967: 41):

> "Black power is a psychological reaction to the psychological indoctrination that led to the creation of the perfect slave. While this reaction has often led to negative and unrealistic responses and has frequently brought about intemperate words and actions, one must not overlook the positive value in calling the Negro to a new sense of manhood, to a deep feeling of racial pride and to an audacious appreciation of his heritage. The Negro must be grasped by a new realization of his dignity and worth. He must stand up amid a system that still oppresses him and develop an unassailable and majestic sense of his own value. He must no longer be ashamed of being black."

King does see some positive elements in black power, but he also rejects several aspects of it. First, he rejects the isolationism that seems to inform black power (1967: 48):

> "Black Power is an implicit and often explicit belief in black separatism. Notice that I do not call it black racism. It is inaccurate to refer to Black Power as racism in reverse, as some have recently done. Racism is a doctrine of the congenital inferiority and worthlessness of a people. While a few angry proponents of Black Power have, in moments of bitterness, made wild statements that come close to this kind of racism, the major proponents of Black Power have never contended that the white man is innately worthless. Yet behind Black Power's legitimate and necessary concern for group unity and black identity lies the belief that there

> can be a separate black road to power and fulfillment. Few ideas are more unrealistic. There is no salvation for the Negro through isolation."

King sees Black Power as arguing for only African-Americans to be involved in struggles for the freedom and liberation of African-Americans. The problem, according to King, is that not only do African-Americans lack the numbers to pursue institutional change purely on their own, but that they are also intimately linked by blood and cultural norms to other groups, particularly whites (1967: 52-53):

> "In the final analysis the weakness of Black Power is its failure to see that the black man needs the white man and the white man needs the black man. However much we may try to romanticize the slogan, there is no separate black path to power and fulfillment that does not intersect white paths, and there is no separate white path to power and fulfillment, short of social disaster, that does not share that power with black aspirations for freedom and human dignity. The language, the cultural patterns, the music, the material prosperity and even the food of America are an amalgam of black and white."

King goes on to say that this suggests a fundamental dilemma for being an African-American in America: "In physical as well as cultural terms every Negro is a little bit colored and a little bit white" (1967: 53). The intersection and interrelationship between whites and African-Americans is woven into the fiber of society; one cannot be separated from the other, no matter how difficult this intersection proves for creating African-American liberation. Black power, through its emphasis on separatism, seeks to divide African-Americans in an ontological sense; that to be "black" is different than to be "white" when in fact they are blended with one another. King does not mean to

suggest that because of blending whites are absolved of seeking justice for those that they oppress. King sees the need for power sharing, which means that whites and African-Americans (as well as other ethnic and racial groups) must be "partners in power" (King 1967: 54). This "sharing of power" for King is a distinguishing feature of his perspective that movements and organizations for black power misunderstand and ignore.

Beyond the problem of separatism, King also believes that (1967: 55):

> "the most destructive feature of Black Power is its unconscious and often conscious call for retaliatory violence…[A]s one who has worked and talked intimately with devotees of Black Power, I must admit that the slogan is mainly used by persons who have lost faith in the method and philosophy of nonviolence."

King's belief that black power can be equated with violence, but not indiscriminate or aggressive violence, comes from his understanding of the philosophical assumptions informing black power movements. He believes that a commitment to violence comes from the ideas in the black power movement concerning how violence can be cathartic and the degree to which nonviolence and progress are linked to bourgeois values. Beyond King's claim that black power is committed to the use of violence, he also examines the claim of self-defense made by the Black Panther Party.

For King, claiming "self-defense" in the sense of black power movements equates with finding a justification for the use of violence. In seeking a justification for the use of violence, the reason for engaging in self-defense is lost: to combat the primary evil one wants to eliminate (King 1964: 55-56). The emphasis on self-defense is also hard to distinguish in practice from aggressive violence, therefore making it a precarious

basis upon which to build a movement for seeking justice and ending oppression. Due to the problems of black power and violence, King emphasizes the need to use non-violent protests as a means to achieve desired ends. He does so because he sees these tactics as providing a form of power, one that is informed by morality and conscience (King 1967: 59). While King sees the need for African-Americans to achieve and hold power, the use of violence to achieve such power only destroys the ethical basis for using and acquiring power in the first place. King sees a moral foundation to power, and the use of such power in achieving liberation. For King, liberation can not come through violence, because the ultimate goal of African-American liberation – true intergroup and interpersonal living – is only achieved by pursuing tactics that provide an ethical basis for guaranteeing the worth and dignity of all human persons (King 1967: 97; 100).

Both Rustin and King have strong criticisms of the black nationalist and black power movements. Their emphases on how such movements potentially isolate African-Americans, create an atmosphere of violence, and deny the worth of coalitions with other groups, particularly whites, reveals deep differences between the old guard civil rights leaders and those committed to black nationalism and black power. These differences, emphasizing the role of tactics and coalition building, also shows that changes in patterns of thought and political activity occurred from the early 1960s to the late 1960s in the movement for African-American liberation.

It is important to note that both Rustin and King do see some positive elements in black nationalism and black power. They also share the commitments of these movements to dealing with the economic deprivation of African-Americans and the explanations offered for economic inequality that argue the American political economy

is structured to deny equal access and opportunities to African-Americans. Both of them also recognize the value of seeking to develop a conception of African-American identity. Both Rustin and King (at least implicitly) see that questions of race and class are interrelated with one another; that to focus on one to the exclusion of the other is to misunderstand the current plight of African-Americans.

Critical Appraisal of Black Nationalism, Black Power, and Old-Guard Civil Rights Activism

With all of the differences between black nationalism, black power and the old guard civil rights leaders, it seems difficult to describe the ideas of these movements and leaders as comprising a coherent, integrated narrative that affects African-American political behavior. While there are differences, some of which are profound, it is important to realize that there is some underlying coherence to the ideas of the African-American liberation movements of the 1960s. This coherence is premised upon the values of developing racial unity, promoting African-American identity and consciousness, and a growing appreciation of how race and class intersect to generate patterns of political, social and economic inequality. By arguing that a shared set of ideas and values link black nationalism, black power and old-guard civil rights activism, we can see how the NS narrative developed and its impacts on African-American political behavior.

In all three cases, African-Americans during the 1960s emphasized the need to develop racial unity as a group to pursue their desired changes in American social, political and economic life. Whether it was through a call to black power, a desire to build and sustain African-American institutions, or a desire to reform American

institutions through coalitions, the focus on racial unity as a basis from which changes could develop is extremely important. An emphasis on unity helped to provide coherence to different movements and it facilitated the development of solidarity among African-Americans as they sought to undermine white racism and the various forms of exploitation that come from white racism. Many actors involved in generating African-American social movements emphasized the relationship between class and racial oppression, indicating that they implicitly recognized class-based differences within the African-American community. That such differences were recognized does not undermine a commitment to racial unity insofar as class-based differences were not seen as insurmountable for creating solidarity among all African-Americans. As scholars have noted, African-Americans (despite intragroup class differences) have maintained a strong belief that their individual fate is linked to the fate of the larger group, and this belief informs their political attitudes and behavior (Dawson 1994).

Conceptually, racial unity requires that African-Americans have a set of shared interests, values and political orientations that inform how they understand and interpret their political, social and economic reality. Group-based perceptions are crucial, as are shared experiences that provide a prism through which events, actors and institutions are understood. The import of emphasizing racial unity is that group values and beliefs shape perceptions, which in turn alter behavior. Malcolm X, the Black Panthers, Stokely Carmichael and old guard civil rights activists such as Martin Luther King Jr., recognized how unified belief systems could be a basis from which to build broader social movements committed to common goals. The rhetorical usage of racial unity has practical importance for it implies a set of aspirations that have wide-spread appeal to

individuals who comprise particular racial groupings. Given that there are differences within the sets of actors who developed the NS narrative, an emphasis on racial unity is not meant to eradicate such differences, but to provide a common framework through which differences could be discussed and re-articulated as actors set about the task of articulating the moral precepts of African-American social, political and economic life.

In addition to unity, an emphasis on developing African-American identity and group consciousness informed the political activities of the African-American liberation movement. While the substance of such an identity or group consciousness was highly debated, most of the actors involved in the African-American liberation movements of the 1960s saw a need for African-Americans to develop a sense of collective self; what it meant to be African-American given the problematic history of discrimination found in American society.

Finally, during the 1960s, African-American thinkers, leaders and movement organizers began to realize the intersection between race, class, and by the late 1960s, gender. The dominant argument prior to the 1960s was that race dominated how African-Americans were treated by American society. By the 1960s, African-Americans became more critical of the American political economy, and spurred on by the influence of Marxist thought, generated a critique of American capitalism by suggesting that one's class status also mattered for access to social goods and economic opportunities. This emphasis facilitated the development of black working class movements, and it also helped to facilitate coalitions between African-American workers and whites by emphasizing a common source of oppression: economic exploitation based on class.

By the end of the 1960s a wide variety of organizations and movements had developed to articulate new demands on behalf of African-Americans: they sought economic opportunity and an end to discriminatory practices based on white racism. By many measures, the movements of the 1960s were successful; they had challenged white supremacy and won legislative victories ensuring (at least in law) that African-Americans could vote and have access to public accommodations. The end results of these movements enabled African-Americans to mount challenges to their social and economic inequality, but they paid a heavy price for such challenges. By the late 1960s, the civil rights movement as well as the black nationalist and black power movements had suffered tremendous losses, particularly in leadership. They also lost sympathetic whites who could have potentially implemented changes in American institutions to allow African-Americans greater access to economic opportunity. A list of those leaders who were assassinated or killed in the 1960s reveals the scope of the loss: John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, Malcolm X was assassinated in 1965, and Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968 (along with Robert Kennedy). Beyond the loss of leadership through assassination, the black nationalist and black power movements were also subject to government repression, especially through such programs as COINTELPRO and the violent activity of police officers against movement leaders (Marable 2007: 109-110). By the late 1960s, many leaders of a variety of organizations pursuing African-American liberation were dead, in jail, or otherwise repressed by the Nixon Administration which took power in 1968.

While repression of black nationalist, black power and the more traditional civil rights movement left the search for African-American liberation in disarray, it is

important to note the variety of other social movements that occurred throughout the 1960s, including the Women's Movement, the student movements and, into the 1970s, the gay and lesbian movements. These movements helped to generate an awareness that not only race, and class mattered for African-American liberation, but also questions of gender equality both within the African-American liberation movement, and in the Women's movement (Dawson 2001: 135-172). The nexus generated between race, class and gender would be important for later African-American women as they began to describe the plight of African-American women in American society.[83]

By the dawn of the 1970s, the African-American movement for liberation had suffered some severe setbacks through the loss of leadership and governmental repression. Yet, despite such problems, the movement for African-American liberation continued. What emerged in the 1970s was the beginning of what some scholars have labeled the "new black voter" (Preston et. al. 1987; Tate 1993); African-Americans began to participate electorally and helped to elect many African-Americans to positions of political power at the local, state, and national levels:

> "The Voting Rights Act of 1965, combined with the registration campaigns of SNCC, CORE and the NAACP, dramatically increased the numbers of black potential voters. Thus the number of black elected officials continued to climb at an unprecedented rate. In March 1969, there were 994 black men and 131 black women who held offices across the country. By May 1975, this figure had more than tripled, to 2,969 black men and 530 black women. In the latter year, there

[83] It is important to note that there is a long tradition of African-American women thinkers and writers who were instrumental in providing a basis for the emergence of African-American Feminism in the 1970s and 1980s. For a review, see Dawson 2001: 135-172. For an example of such work, see bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1984).

were 18 blacks in Congress, 281 serving as state legislators or executives; 135 mayors of cities, towns, or municipalities; 305 county executives; 387 judges and elected law enforcement officers; 939 elected to city or county boards of education; and another 1,438 elected to other positions of municipal government" (Marable 2007: 116-117). [84]

The rise of African-Americans as a voting block became a source of political power for African-Americans. Yet, their political power was still marginalized, forcing African-Americans to build organizations such as the Congressional Black Caucus in the early 1970s to recruit and fund African-American candidates for elected office. The pursuit of electoral politics also intersected with the tradition of protest politics in the African-American community. The best example of this was the Gary Convention in March of 1972.

During this convention, almost 12,000 persons attended. The major emphasis of the convention was the pursuit of black nationalist principles through electoral politics aimed at building an independent Black party (Marable 2007:121). The Gary Convention's Program Statement reveals the intersection of black nationalism and electoral politics (Gary 2000: 495):

"The challenge is thrown to us here in Gary. It is the challenge to consolidate and organize our own Black role as the vanguard in the struggle for a new society. To accept that challenge is to move independent Black politics. There can be no equivocation on that issue. History leaves us no other choice. White politics has

[84] The numbers reported by Marable have increased substantially since 1975, suggesting that African-Americans have embraced electoral politics and by doing so, have a (potentially) greater impact on the direction of public policy. See Tate 1991 for a review of increased African-American representation in the U.S. Congress.

> not and cannot bring the changes we need. We come to Gary and are faced with a challenge. The challenge is to transform ourselves from favor-seeking vassals and loud-talking, "militant" pawns, and to take up the role that the organized masses of our people have attempted to play ever since we came to these shores: That of harbingers of true justice and humanity, leaders in the struggle for liberation. A major part of the challenge that we must accept is that of redefining the functions and operations of all levels of American government, for the existing governing structures – from Washington to the smallest county – are obsolescent."

In this statement, the delegates attending the Gary convention blend together a commitment to black nationalism, Marxism and an emphasis on changing the institutional foundations of American society by being engaged in electoral politics. The intersection of these patterns of thought gives the impression that African-Americans seek to pursue power through their unity as a people and as a voting bloc committed to ending all forms of oppression – political, economic and social. The basis of a strong commitment to ending economic oppression that informs the Gary Program derives from African-American laborers generating their own trade unions committed to principles of Marxist-Leninism in the early 1970s (Dawson 2001: 198-221; Marable 2007: 112-117). While the Gary Program is not reducible to Marxist-Leninist principles, it is important to note the continuity between the pursuit of transforming American politics through electoral participation *and* social movements committed to linking white racism and economic exploitation in American society, especially as found in the ideas of the Black Panther Party and the OAAU.

By the early to mid 1970s, African-Americans had elected candidates to office, but those elected officials faced a number of problems, including the deterioration of urban city centers, poverty, and white flight from cities to suburbs which robbed cities of the tax revenue needed to address wide spread social and economic problems (Marable 2007: 121). The election of President Richard Nixon in 1968 and again in 1972 created a context in which African-Americans as well as other racial and ethnic groups seeking power were forcefully repressed. The "law-and-order" slogan of Richard Nixon helped to create a growing white backlash against the various social movements that had proliferated in the 1960s (Marable 2007: 124). This white backlash also occurred due the affirmative action policies created in the 1960s and early 1970s to help African-Americans achieve representation in elite institutions of higher learning, to garner federal work contracts, and to have greater access to the American labor market. Not only did white backlash begin to have an effect on African-American movements for liberation, but intra-community debates about how to pursue political power and challenge forms of economic exploitation also helped to splinter the developing movement that had been initiated at the Gary Convention.

By mid 1970s, African-American electoral politics did not produce an independent African-American party, and those who were elected by African-American constituencies tended to be from the African-American middle class who were committed to American capitalism and less likely to advocate for deep changes to American social, political and economic life. This is not to suggest that the African-American middle class was reactive; it still struggled to compete with the white middle class who retained access to most of the highly paid, highly skilled jobs (Marable 2007: 149). The election of

middle-class African-Americans to public office had the effect of shifting African-American political activity away from protest movements to electoral politics. Despite this shift, elements did emerge in the African-American community which emphasized new forms of international cooperation and solidarity among all peoples of color (see Baraka 1972: 498-499), but the overall movement was to electoral politics, and aligning with the Democratic Party.

The 1970s were a time of hope and difficulty for African-Americans seeking liberation. While African-Americans had elected African-American officials to office, the social environment created by Nixon led to the deterioration of a broad-based social movement on the part of African-Americans.[85] African-Americans also contributed to this deterioration by engaging in inter and intra-group conflicts that had the effect of making the development of a consensus on how African-American liberation would occur difficult if not impossible to sustain (Marable 2007: 134-135). Finally, by the mid to late 1970s, African-American communities in urban centers deteriorated, leading to high rates of violence, disease, and further breakdown of the African-American family (Marable 2007: 151-153). As the 1980s dawned, African-Americans were faced with white hostility, economic deprivation (particularly for working-class and poor African-Americans), and a lack of coherence to their political activities that could enable them to pursue changes in American political, economic and social life.

[85] The point of emphasizing Nixon's repression of black nationalist and black power movements is not to suggest that African-Americans lost hope or perceived the NS narrative as less valuable politically. The point is to suggest that external political forces had the effect of making mobilization based upon the NS narrative more difficult to generate.

The Anti-Transformative Racial Narrative

As was discussed in chapter 1, the anti-transformative racial narrative has several characteristics. These are:

1. A veneration of social and moral order, stability and the pursuit of self-control, limited gratification and respect for authority, coupled with a deep skepticism of governmental activities to ameliorate racial injustice.
2. An emphasis on pursuing a "color-blind" society by ignoring the degree to which "racial" norms and practices are implicated in the functioning of society and its social, economic and political institutions.
3. A commitment to procedural equal opportunity in the pursuit of social goods without a concomitant acceptance that the procedures used for distributing social goods are affected by socio-structural and political inequalities which in turn affect the extent to which such distributions are fair or just.

The anti-transformative narrative is a compilation of two forms of political thought: libertarianism and conservatism. This might seem like a strange intellectual foundation for the anti-transformative narrative, but it is important to show how libertarian emphases on limited government, procedural equal opportunity and a relatively unfettered free market are wedded to conservative values such as maintaining the status quo, seeing economic inequalities as a basis for economic growth, and the importance of hard work and personal responsibility as the basis for success in the marketplace.[86]

[86] It is important to note that the anti-transformative racial narrative is not equivalent to the white supremacist racial narrative developed in chapter 3. It does not advocate that African-Americans are biologically inferior, nor does it argue that African-Americans should be banned from public life and political activity. Instead, it critiques the size and scope of government, and discounts the role that racism and discrimination play in how valued social goods are distributed in society through market interaction.

Libertarian and conservative political thought do not necessarily discuss "race", or racial injustice. The fact that libertarians deny a role for government in redressing inequalities through market interaction and that conservatives emphasize personal responsibility implies that libertarians and conservatives are deeply skeptical of using governmental power to redress racial injustices and other forms of racial inequity. That the African-American social movements of the 1960s emphasized a need for governmental action to redress racial inequality indicates libertarians and conservatives would see such claims on the part of African-Americans as undercutting their commitments to limited government and violating their conceptions of personal morality emphasizing that poor choices on the part of individuals (not structural inequalities) are the root cause of poverty and inequality. Libertarian and conservative thought, therefore, is implicitly racialized insofar as their arguments have the tendency to deny African-American claims for governmental redress of inequality and blame African-Americans for their own plight due to poor choices.

Libertarianism

Libertarianism is a political philosophy that advocates personal liberty. It seeks to allow individuals to be relatively unconstrained by external forces (particularly governments) and sees the expression of personal liberty best approximated in free-market capitalism where individuals can use their own private property for whatever ends the individual may choose, subject to certain minimum constraints. Libertarianism is a modern expression of the classical forms of liberalism that were developed in the 18th Century which emphasized negative liberty.[87]

[87] Negative liberty can be defined as the absence of external constraints on individual choices and behavior. The critical point is that individuals are free to the extent that external actors (particularly governments) are

The philosophical bases of libertarian political thought have been developed by many scholars. For example, in Friedrich A. Hayek's, *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960) a good expression of what freedom (or personal liberty) means for libertarians is articulated (1960: 140):

> "It seems that freedom demands no more than that coercion and violence, fraud and deception, be prevented, except for the use of coercion by government for the sole purpose of enforcing known rules intended to secure the best conditions under which the individual may give his activities a coherent, rational pattern."

For Hayek, governmental coercion is limited to creating a rule-governed context where individuals can choose their own life goals. Individuals ought to be able to choose their own ends subject to certain constraints such as laws and taxation for the provision of basic public goods. Beyond such constraints the government's ability to constrain individual behavior, thought and action should be limited. The limits placed on governmental coercion rely upon the idea of a private sphere in which individuals can develop their own conceptions of the good and use their resources to pursue these conceptions (Hayek 1960: 143-144).

The focus is on providing individuals the ability to pursue their own conceptions of the good with as minimal interference by government as possible. By providing individuals freedom, human society is better able to learn and generate new understandings of social, political and economic life (Hayek 1960: 145). Freedom is therefore a means to individually-defined ends. By allowing individuals to pursue their

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limited in how they can affect and structure the ways individuals use their private property and other resources.

own conceptions of the good, society and individuals are better off politically, socially and economically.

For libertarians, one of the best institutions that enable humans to be free subject to certain constraints is the free-market. Individuals make choices about using their private property according to their own interests, and the results of market interaction (e.g. the distribution of social goods) are fair given that the rules of the market are enforced disallowing any individual or groups of individuals to monopolize or control the marketplace.

A good example of the argument that free-markets are excellent for providing human freedom comes from the work of Milton A. Friedman. In his *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962), he begins his analysis by describing what a market is, and how it allows for human freedom (1962:13):

> "The possibility of co-ordination through voluntary co-operation rests on the elementary – yet frequently denied – proposition that both parties to an economic transaction benefit from it, *provided the transaction is bi-laterally voluntary and informed*. Exchange can therefore bring about co-ordination without coercion. A working model of a society organized through voluntary exchange is a *free private enterprise exchange economy* – …. In its simplest form, such a society consists of a number of independent households – a collection of Robinson Crusoe's, as it were. Each household uses the resources it controls to produce goods and services that it exchanges for goods and services produced by other households, on terms mutually acceptable to the two parties to the bargain" (emphasis added).

Humans, in the market, can enter into voluntary economic exchanges with other individuals.[88] The important elements of a free-market include: 1) voluntary exchanges: individuals cannot be coerced into buying or selling relationships, and 2) that individuals engaged in economic exchanges have access to relevant information to make an informed choice about whether or not to enter into an economic exchange. Another element must also be added: 3) that individuals privately own what it is that they are selling. If individuals do not have ownership of objects, the buying and selling relationship breaks down because they have no control over the object they seek to sell to potential buyers. The market is an excellent institution for providing human freedoms because it allows exchanges on a voluntary basis between individuals, and individuals are free to enter into (or not enter into) economic exchanges based upon their own particular interests.

Even though Friedman emphasizes the need for free-markets to allow for human freedom, he also sees a role for government in constraining markets so that individuals can make voluntary exchanges. For Friedman, the government is best understood as an "umpire" who, "determine[s], arbitrate[s], and enforce[s] the rules of the game" (1962: 27). For governments to fulfill their duties as umpires they must provide:

> "the maintenance of law and order to prevent coercion of one individual by another, the enforcement of contracts voluntarily entered into, the definition of the meaning of property rights, the interpretation and enforcement of such rights, and the provision of a monetary framework" (Friedman 1962: 27).

For Friedman, without the provision of the rules of the game to govern market

[88] Of course, libertarians assume that individuals subject to market exchanges have relatively equal bargaining power, e.g. that no one individual monopolizes information or other resources that gives them the ability to "force" others to engage in market exchanges with them.

interaction, the voluntary basis of economic exchange is difficult to sustain. The government, therefore, acts as a neutral arbitrator, applying the general rules to particular concrete situations between individuals engaged in economic exchanges. In no way should governments overstep their role as an umpire mitigating and resolving conflicts between free individuals.

If libertarians advocate for human freedom, and see human interaction in the marketplace (subject to certain constraints) as the best institutional approximation of freedom, what about the resulting distribution of goods that comes from voluntary human economic exchanges? Human beings have differing capacities and talents, and some can be more successful than others in acquiring valued social goods, creating inequality. How do libertarians account for the inequalities that result from voluntary economic exchange?

In the work of Robert Nozick, a libertarian theory of distributive justice is derived that relies on three basic premises to account for the distribution of valued social goods through market interaction and the fairness of such distributions. In his work, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974), Nozick argues for an "Entitlement Theory" of distributive justice. He begins his argument by stating that the whole subject of "distributive justice" is problematic, for a variety of reasons. For him, to speak of "distributive justice" is to presume some central force or entity that doles out shares of valued social goods. The problem is that, at least in Nozick's theory (1974: 149-150):

> "There is no central distribution, no person or group entitled to control all the resources, jointly deciding how they are to be doled out. What each person gets, he gets from others who give to him in exchange for something, or as a gift. In a

> free society, diverse persons control different resources, and new holdings arise out of the voluntary exchanges and actions of persons…The total result is the product of many individual decisions which the different individuals involved are entitled to make."

Due to his emphasis on voluntary exchanges, Nozick deems it more appropriate to speak about the just distribution of people's holdings, how they acquired them, and what a just distribution of holdings requires. Nozick then outlines the principles that define a just distribution of holdings. Nozick's argument deals with three interrelated ideas. The first is how individuals acquire "unheld things", leading him to specify a "principle of justice in acquisition": the initial acquisition of things must be done in a legitimate way, e.g. not through force or fraud (Nozick 1974: 151). If we steal or force other individuals to give up their holdings in order for us to acquire their holdings, we have no right to such holdings because we violate the right of other individuals to hold and acquire holdings. The second idea is the "principle of justice in transfer": assuming that we meet the principle of justice in acquisition, we are allowed to transfer our holdings to others whether through the giving of gifts or buying and selling relationships. This principle is of particular importance, because it provides a basis for changes in distributions over time. Finally, Nozick specifies his third idea, the "principle of justice in rectification": if current distributions of holdings depend upon injustices (e.g. violating the principle of just acquisition and just transfer) the original injustice caused by seizing holdings from others generates a potential claim for rectification (Nozick 149: 152).[89]

[89] The emphasis on a "potential claim for rectification" is due to Nozick's argument that such claims must be investigated historically, and whether past injustices adversely affect the resulting distributions of social goods.

Once Nozick has specified his three principles, he then indicates how they fit together (1974: 151):

"If the world were wholly just, the following inductive definition would exhaustively cover the subject of justice in holdings:

1. A person who acquires a holding in accordance with the principle of justice in acquisition is entitled to that holding.
2. A person who acquires a holding in accordance with the principle of justice in transfer, from someone else entitled to the holding, is entitled to the holding.
3. No one is entitled to a holding except by (repeated) applications of 1 and 2.

The complete principle of distributive justice would say simply that a distribution is just if everyone is entitled to the holdings they possess under the distribution. A distribution is just if it arises from another just distribution by legitimate means…whatever arises from a just situation by just steps is itself just…As correct rules of inference are truth-preserving, and any conclusion deduced via repeated application of such rules from only true premises is itself true, so the means of transition from one situation to another specified by the principle of justice in transfer are justice-preserving, and any situation actually arising from repeated transitions in accordance with the principle for a just situation is itself just."

Nozick's argument is that so long as principles 1 and 2 are met, any resulting distribution of holdings is also just. Whether or not a distribution of holdings is just depends upon how it was created. So long as his principles are followed, inequalities in the distribution of holdings resulting from unequal amounts of holdings and the transfer

of such holdings are not unjust.[90] For Nozick, the fact that inequalities arise from the voluntary exchange of holdings is not problematic. Because of this, he does not see any need for *re*distribution of holdings based upon "end-result" or "historical-time-slice principles": to apply a principle of distribution (such as equality) after a distribution results from the just transfer of goods is unjust because it violates the ability of individuals to engage in voluntary exchange of their own holdings. The basic argument is that inequalities in holdings resulting from the repeated application of his two main principles are not unjust, and we should not seek to apply principles that change the resulting distributions to meet some pre-specified value such as equality.[91]

Nozick's argument surrounding the just distribution of holdings indicates that there need be no centralized entity to engage in distributing holdings. Through the free and voluntary exchanges of individuals, distributions ought not to be changed for to do so would undermine the ability of individuals to pursue their own ends by using their holdings as they see fit. Nozick's theory implies that when governments use their coercive power through taxation to force individuals to pay for social welfare programs

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[90] His third principle fits in here: *if* his two prior principles are violated, then the idea of a resulting distribution as being just is called into question. The third principle is an egalitarian aspect to Nozick's theory that has its basis in a Kantian assumption that human beings ought not to be treated as means to others' ends, but rather as ends in themselves. For a review, see Kymlicka 2002: 107-127.

[91] One might argue that Nozick's procedural conception of justice has little to say about the distribution of social goods between whites and African-Americans given that force and fraud were used by whites to appropriate the labor of African-Americans. The point of specifying Nozick's procedural conception of distributive justice is to show the logic of how market interaction generates inequalities, and that such inequalities are not in and of themselves patently unjust. Nozick's theory does lead to the result that African-Americans have claims of rectification against white society, but because Nozick's theory is *historical*, such claims would require extensive research to show how whites' unjust appropriation of African-American labor is tied to the specific actions of particular white individuals or families. African-American claims of rectification could not be made against "white society", since some members of white society presumably have no historical link to slavery and other forms of African-American oppression. Nozick's principle of rectification would also likely apply to other ethnic groups in American society such as Native-Americans, Italian-Americans, Irish-Americans and many more. In applying Nozick's principle of rectification, competing claims by many groups would have to be adjudicated, making the application of his principle difficult to apply in practice.

to correct for inequality, they are acting unjustly because they take the holdings of individuals that were justly acquired by or transferred to them. If individuals are going to be treated fairly, governments cannot engage in the redistribution of holdings, for to do so would violate individual freedom.

In Nozick's theory we see the development of what might be called an egalitarian-conservatism. On the one hand, Nozick's theory is (weakly) egalitarian: people, if they have acquired their holdings justly, deserve to be allowed to use those holdings as they see fit; no one should be able to limit how individuals use their own holdings. On the other hand, Nozick's theory is conservative: because people have the freedom to do what they want with their holdings, inequalities will likely arise in the distribution of holdings, and these inequalities are not unjust.[92] The important point to note is that Nozick's theory provides an egalitarian basis for the justness of inequalities because for Nozick everyone has equal ownership of their capacities and equal opportunity to gain from their ambitions. In doing so, his theory provides a conceptual foundation for seeing inequalities as not patently unjust due to human freedom. If a society values human freedom, then that society must also recognize that inequalities will arise in the holdings that individuals possess, and to seek to change these inequalities is an injustice.

The conception of egalitarian-conservatism that underlies Nozick's theory provides legitimacy to the argument that free markets – since they are based on the

[92] The term "conservative" here might be misleading. Nozick's theory emphasizes self-ownership of holdings and the free use of such holdings, allowing for the presence of inequality in the distribution of holdings. The fact that Nozick does not see these inequalities as unjust reveals a "conservative" emphasis on seeing inequality as potentially beneficial. It is important to note that Nozick's "conservatism" relies upon a conception of human freedom that is classically liberal. The term "conservative" is meant to deal with the justness of inequalities, even if Nozick's theory also incorporates classically liberal ideas.

voluntary activity of free individuals – are the best way to distribute valued social goods.[93] The fact that inequalities arise from market interaction is not a consequence of markets per se, but arises from the free choices of individuals to use their resources as they deem fit. Governmental intrusion into the market place or governmental programs which seek to *re*distribute goods violates human freedom. The crucial point is that governmental regulation and the creation of social entitlement programs to deal with market inequalities oversteps the bounds of what governments can permissibly do given the importance of personal liberty in American society.

The anti-transformative narrative begins with the egalitarian-conservatism described above, but this argument is then complimented by an emphasis on the destructive social, economic and political consequences associated with regulating the marketplace and using governmental power to help those in society who struggle to be successful in the marketplace. What emerges is an emphasis on egalitarian-conservatism underwritten by severe critiques of governmental involvement in the free choices of individuals, and a conception of moral order which gives legitimacy to such critiques.

Conservatism

One place to begin in detailing the critiques of conservatives is to focus on the principles that underlie conservative political thought (Kirk 1953; 1993). Conservatives,

[93] Market exchanges are likely to contain power differences that affect the "voluntary" nature of such exchanges. If we use Friedman's arguments concerning governments as "umpires" and wed this to Nozick's theory of distributive justice, libertarians *could* argue that through governmental enforcement of the "rules of the game" such power differentials might be ameliorated. The presentation of Friedman's and Nozick's arguments is not to downplay the importance of power imbalances in market exchanges. Instead, their arguments provide a justification for minimal governmental interference in the capitalist economy, and their arguments also suggest how markets and governments are related with one another in a society such as America that values human liberty.

according to Russell Kirk, maintain at least 10 core principles that inform how they understand social, political and economic reality (1993:17):[94]

> "First, the conservative believes that there exists an enduring moral order. That order is made for man, and man is made for it: human nature is a constant, and moral truths are permanent. This word *order* signifies harmony. There are two aspects or types of order: the inner order of the soul, and the outer order of the commonwealth…Our twentieth-century world has experienced the hideous consequences of the collapse in the belief in a moral order" (emphasis original).

Conservatives believe in the interrelationship between morality and the establishment of a political community. That moral order is linked to social and political order suggests another important principle for conservatives:

> "The conservative adheres to custom, convention, and continuity…Continuity is the means of linking generation to generation; it matters as much for society as it does for the individual; without it, life is meaningless…Thus the body social is a kind of spiritual corporation, comparable to the church; it may even be called a community of souls. Human society is no machine, to be treated mechanically. The continuity, the life-blood, of a society must not be interrupted" (Kirk 1993: 19).[95]

Conservatives believe that long-established practices and social customs provide a

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[94] The current chapter will not discuss all ten "core" principles, but only those that are relevant for the anti-transformative narrative. Please see Russell Kirk's discussions of such "core" principles in his *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Elliot* (1953), and his *The Politics of Prudence* (1993).

[95] See also Michael Oakeshott's critique of "Rationalism" in politics in his *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (1962), pgs. 1-38. Essentially, Oakeshott critiques the emphasis on using human rationality to "perfect" human institutions and practices.

spiritual linkage between generations, and such practices and customs become the basis for a political community's collective identity. It is important to note that this collective identity presumes that society is not mechanistic but rather like a "body", whose parts fit together to form an organic whole. Because of this assumption:

> "Conservatives are chastened by their principle of imperfectability. Human nature suffers irremediably from certain grave faults, the conservatives know. Man being imperfect, no perfect social order ever can be created…The ideologues who promise the perfection of man and society have converted a great part of the twentieth-century world into a terrestrial hell" (Kirk 1993: 21).

The assumption that humans are imperfect and that social and political power cannot be (nor should be) used to create "perfection" relies upon a conservative assumption that inequality (in its variety of forms in society) cannot be eradicated and the pursuit of policies to end inequality (what conservatives label as 'economic leveling') are not only doomed to fail, but imperil the proper functioning of a political community (Kirk 1993: 20-1). Closely linked to the idea that inequality is endemic to human society is the value conservatives place on individual liberty and private property:

> "Conservatives are persuaded that freedom and property are closed linked…Upon the foundation of private property, great civilizations are built. The more widespread is the possession of private property, the more stable and productive is a commonwealth…[private property] has been a powerful instrument for teaching men and women responsibility, for providing motives to integrity, for supporting general culture, for raising mankind above the level of mere drudgery, for affording leisure to think and freedom to act. To be able to retain the fruit's of

> one's labor; to be able to see one's work made permanent; to be able to bequeath one's property to one's posterity; to be able to rise from the natural condition of grinding poverty to the security of enduring accomplishment; to have something that is really one's own – these are advantages difficult to deny" (Kirk 1993: 22).

Conservatives believe that allowing individuals (through their hard work) to own private property generates in humans the necessary "virtues" that make a society flourish. This emphasis leads conservatives to be extremely wary of attempts through governmental programs and power to redistribute private productive property to those that struggle in society. When governments engage in redistribution of property, they undercut the desire on the part of individuals to work hard and to take on the responsibilities that come from possessing private property and the wealth it generates.

Linked to the conservative idea that human liberty and the possession of private property are vital to proper functioning of political communities is their belief in local decision-making and a wariness of centralized political authority:

> "Conservatives uphold voluntary community, quite as they oppose involuntary collectivism…In a genuine community, the decisions most directly affecting the lives of citizens are made locally and voluntarily. Some of these functions are carried out by local political bodies, others by private associations: so long as they are kept local, and are marked by the general agreement of those affected, they constitute healthy community. But when these functions pass by default or usurpation to centralized authority, then community is in serious danger…For a nation is no stronger than the numerous little communities of which it is composed. A central administration, or a corps of select managers and civil

> servants, however well intentioned and trained, cannot confer justice and prosperity and tranquility upon a mass of men and women deprived of their old responsibilities" (Kirk 1993: 23).

Because conservatives are wary of centralized authority and see value in local forms of decision-making, they also: "perceive the need for prudent restraints upon power and upon human passions" (Kirk 1993: 23). For conservatives:

> "Knowing human nature for a mixture of good and evil, [they] do not put [their] trust in mere benevolence. Constitutional restrictions, political checks and balances, adequate enforcement of the laws, the old intricate web of restraints upon will and appetite – these [they] approve as instruments of freedom and order. A just government maintains a healthy tension between the claims of authority and the claims of liberty" (Kirk 1993: 24).

To summarize, conservatives believe in a conception of politics that is underwritten by a moral order that assumes humans are imperfect, that they desire freedom (and the material benefits of such freedom), and that humans (if they are to protect their freedom) require decentralized forms of political authority. These ideas form the "conservative worldview", or the underlying sets of arguments and principles which inform how conservatives understand politics, social life and economic well-being. The importance of this "worldview" is that it forms (with libertarian thought) the conceptual basis for the anti-transformative narrative which developed beginning in the early 1960s.[96] As can be seen, both libertarians and conservatives maintain that

[96] It is important to note that American conservatives, particularly from the 1960s until the 1980s, consistently stressed the Soviet Union as the epitome of anti-conservative (and anti-American) values. Therefore, many conservative authors' arguments emphasize the growth of the American federal government as akin to Soviet-style communism.

governments ought to be controlled and limited, and that when they engage in redistributing income or wealth, they over-step their bounds and, at least for conservatives, undercut the moral order that maintains society over time. Therefore, these commitments lead libertarians and conservatives to be wary of claims made by marginalized groups for governmental redress of inequality. In order to explicate this narrative, it is important to understand the public intellectuals who propagated it. The main public intellectuals who were involved in making the anti-transformative narrative are varied, but this chapter will focus on several actors, including William F. Buckley Jr., Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan, Clare Boothe Luce and Phyllis Schlafly.

American Conservatism: 1950 – 1990

In the early 1950s, a populist form of conservatism emerged in American politics.[97] Its intellectual basis can best be described as a hybrid, bringing together classical conservative principles and a libertarian emphasis on individual liberty and the sanctity of private property. This intellectual foundation can be seen in public statements made by William F. Buckley, Jr. In his *Today We are Educated Men* (1950), delivered at his Yale commencement ceremony, the basics of American conservatism are articulated. Buckley begins by recognizing that he (as well as his fellow graduates) are privileged in a dual sense: they are economically well off and they have been provided an excellent undergraduate education at Yale University (Buckley, Jr. 1950: 16). Despite this recognition, Buckley is also critical of Yale (1950: 16-17):

"Here we can find men who will tell us that Jesus Christ was the greatest fraud

[97] The purpose of the following section is *not* to provide a historical overview of post-World War II American Conservatism. The intellectual foundations of American conservatism are wide and varied. For an explication of the foundations of conservatism as a political ideology see Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Elliot* (1953).

> that history has known. Here we can find men who will tell us that morality is an anachronistic conception, rendered obsolete by the advances of human thought. From neo-Benthamites at Yale we can learn that laws are a sociological institution, to be wielded to facilitate the sacrosanct will of the enlightened minority…And so it goes: two and two make three, the shortest distance between two points is a crooked line, good is bad and bad is good, and from this morass we are to extract a workable, enlightened synthesis to govern our thoughts and our actions, for today we are educated men."

Buckley's argument indicates that higher education is overly critical of established patterns of thought and action. While higher education is presumably where young men develop their intellectual faculties, Buckley argues that higher education actually deforms young men's minds, and leads them to devalue and deny American greatness (1950: 17-19):

> "Certainly civilization cannot advance without freedom of inquiry. This fact is self-evident. What seems equally self-evident is that in the process of history certain immutable truths have been revealed and discovered and that their value is not subject to the limitations of time and space. The probing, the relentless debunking, has engendered a *skepticism* that threatens to pervade and atrophy all our values. In apologizing for our beliefs and our traditions we have bent over backwards so far that we have lost our balance, and we see a topsy-turvy world and we say topsy-turvy things, such as that the way to beat Communism is by making our democracy better. What a curious self examination! Beat the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics by making America socialistic. Beat atheism by

> denying God. Uphold individual freedom by denying natural rights…Our concern for deficiencies in America must not cause us to indict the principles that have allowed our country, its faults notwithstanding, to tower over the nations of the world as a citadel of freedom and wealth"(emphasis added).

Buckley's argument affirms a conservative emphasis on established forms of moral reasoning and order, while linking such forms of order to the political values of America such as individual liberty and private property. His arguments indicate that intellectual development does not require subverting traditional values, but to valorize them. While Buckley does make reference to the fact that America has made mistakes, it is important to note that he minimizes the effects of these mistakes on the importance of American values which he equates with a commitment to conservative principles.

In the same vein, Barry Goldwater argues that America is (and ought to be) defined by conservative values and principles. In his *A Conscience of a Conservative* (1960), Goldwater argues that conservatives believe in an underlying moral order that provides a basis for individual choice and freedom (1960: 12-13):

> "The Conservative realizes…that man's development, in both its spiritual and material aspects, is not something that can be directed by outside forces. Every man, for his individual good and the good of society, is responsible for his *own* development. The choices that govern his life are choices that *he* must make; they cannot be made by any other human being, or by a collectivity of human beings…the Conservative looks upon politics as the art of achieving the maximum amount of freedom for individuals that is consistent with the maintenance of social order" (emphasis original).

Goldwater, much like Buckley, sees conservatives as the bearers of American values, especially individualism and freedom. Goldwater's conception of politics is one that deemphasizes the collective claims of society (and especially the government) on the individual. As Goldwater discusses in his chapter entitled *The Perils of Power*, he affirms the conservative emphasis on limited government as conducive to individual freedom (1960: 18):

> "The framers of the Constitution had learned the lesson. They were not only students of history, but victims of it: they knew from vivid, personal experience that freedom depends upon effective restraints against the accumulation of power in a single authority. And that is what the Constitution *is: a system of restraints against the natural tendency of government to expand in the direction of absolutism*" (emphasis original).

That Goldwater is wary of centralized political power is further affirmed in his belief in states' rights, and the withering way of local control as the national government grows both in size but also breadth, encroaching on the capacity of states to direct their internal functions and to deal with local problems through local institutions (Goldwater 1960: 29-31). A good example for Goldwater is the debate surrounding civil rights legislation.

Goldwater's discussion centers on how a commitment to ever-expanding "civil rights" means the demise of decentralized forms of political power. He believes that a commitment to "civil rights" in the abstract is problematic (1960: 33):

> "Civil rights is frequently used synonymously with "human rights" – or with "natural rights". As often as not, it is simply a name for describing an activity

> that someone deems politically or socially desirable. A sociologist writes a paper proposing to abolish some inequity, or a politician makes a speech about it – and, behold, a new "civil right" is born" (Goldwater 1960: 33).

For Goldwater, "a *civil* right is a right that is asserted and is therefore protected by some valid law" (Goldwater 1960: 33) (emphasis original). Goldwater argues that the proliferation of "civil rights" is really the result of an activist government (particularly the U.S. Supreme Court) who wishes to impose upon local communities certain moral and political constraints on their decision-making. While Goldwater emphasizes that he is not against "civil rights" (particularly in regards to African-Americans), he does believe that the national government has no business involving itself in matters that are not constitutionally given to it.

For example, while Goldwater does see the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court as valuable in that it invalidates racist practices (such as separate and unequal schools), he also sees the decision as an egregious example of the federal government overstepping is constitutional powers (1960: 35):

> "The federal Constitution does *not* require the States to maintain racially mixed schools. Despite the recent holding of the Supreme Court, I am firmly convinced – not only that integrated schools are not required – but that the Constitution does not permit any interference whatsoever by the federal government in the field of education. *It may be just or wise or expedient for negro children to attend the same schools as white children, but they do not have a civil right to do so which is protected by the federal constitution, or which is enforceable by the federal government*" (emphasis added).

Goldwater's commitment to a limited form of government leads him to conclude that the federal government cannot (and should not) use its power to "create" "civil rights" such as the ability of African-American children to attend integrated schools. That Goldwater sees the potential value of such a "civil right" is overshadowed by his commitment to a limited government whose activities must be strictly controlled.

Goldwater ends his discussion of civil rights by affirming his commitment to local control. While Goldwater does recognize that such a commitment can have the effect of allowing for discriminatory laws and practices, he discounts such an argument (1960: 38):

> "It so happens that I am in agreement with the *objectives* of the Supreme Court as stated in the *Brown* decision. I believe that it *is* both wise and just for negro children to attend the same schools as whites, and that to deny them this opportunity carries with it strong implications of inferiority. I am not prepared, however, to impose that judgment of mine on the people of Mississippi or South Carolina, or to tell them what methods should be adopted and what pace should be kept in striving toward that goal. That is their business, not mine. *I believe that the problem of race relations, like all social and cultural problems, is best handled by the people directly concerned. Social and cultural change, however desirable, should not be effected by the engines of national power*. Let us, through persuasion and education, seek to improve institutions we deem defective. But let us, in doing so, respect the orderly process of the law. Any other course enthrones tyrants and dooms freedom" (emphasis added).

In Goldwater's arguments we can see how conservative commitments to

restraining centralized political power can have the effect of allowing for discrimination. That Goldwater does not see a contradiction between a commitment to liberty and allowing for local control in regards to racial relations underscores the degree to which conservatives are willing to accept inequality as an outcome of restraining centralized political power. Complimenting his discussion of civil rights, Goldwater then turns his attention to American welfare policies.

In chapter 5 of his book, he argues against the role of the federal government in providing resources to the poor in American society. Goldwater argues that the growth of the welfare state in America undercuts American political values, particularly individualism and a commitment to private property (Goldwater 1960: 70-71). He argues against providing resources through governmental programs not only because it undercuts American values, but also due to its disastrous consequences for the welfare recipient (1960: 75):

> "He mortgages himself to the federal government. In return for benefits – which, in the majority of cases he pays for – he concedes to the government the ultimate in political power – the power to grant or withhold from him the necessities of life as the government sees fit. Even more important, however, is the effect on him – the elimination of any feeling of responsibility for his own welfare and that of his family and neighbors…Indeed, this is one of the great evils of Welfarism – that it transforms the individual from a dignified, industrious, self-reliant *spiritual* being into a dependent animal creature" (emphasis original).

Because the provision of resources through government destroys the capacity of human beings to be as God intended them to be, Goldwater argues (1960: 77):

> "the material and spiritual sides of man are intertwined; that it is impossible for the State to assume responsibility for one without intruding on the essential nature of the other; that if we take from a man the personal responsibility for caring for his material needs, we take from him also the will and the opportunity to be free."

Goldwater's critique of government-provided resources to the poor in society indicates that when the national government engages in this activity, it disrupts the moral order upon which society is built. Because Goldwater sees so many problems with government-sponsored welfare, he argues for private charity as a means to sustain those in society who struggle. By advocating for private charity, Goldwater believes that members of society will not be dependent upon government and such private acts of kindness will allow individuals to freely choose to give of their resources to others.

Goldwater's arguments are squarely in the conservative tradition, but he also combines conservative arguments with those of libertarians who see the most important political values as individual liberty and private property. While Goldwater's arguments are crucial for the development of the anti-transformative narrative, other actors' ideas are important too.

One such actor is Ronald Reagan. Reagan became active in conservative Republican Party politics in the early 1960s, and he was a spokesman for Barry Goldwater who ran for president in 1964. On the eve of that election, Reagan delivered a speech that set out his own unique understanding of American conservatism. His speech, *A Time for Choosing* (1964), begins with a trenchant critique of the expansion of national government spending, and the debt such spending has created (42). Reagan, echoing

some of the same conclusions as Goldwater, indicates that the government's role is not to control or plan the economy (1964:44-45):

> "[The founding fathers] knew that governments don't control things. A government can't control the economy without controlling people. And they [knew] when a government sets out to do that, it must use force and coercion to achieve its purpose."

For Reagan, government had to be restrained and controlled, allowing for the market economy to thrive. Reagan believed that when governments engaged in over-regulating the economy, individuals were inhibited from making decisions with their own private productive property, stifling innovation and retarding the economic and intellectual progress of America (Reagan 1964: 45-46).

Much like with Goldwater, Reagan critiqued not only the size of government, but also is role as a provider of resources to the poor in society. To prove his point, he recounts a story (1964: 47-48):

> "Not too long ago, a judge called me here in Los Angeles. He told me of a young woman who had come before him for a divorce. She had six children, was pregnant with her seventh. Under her questioning, she revealed her husband was a laborer earning $250 a month. She wanted a divorce so that she could get an $80 raise. She is eligible for $330 a month in the Aid to Dependent Children Program."

The point of Reagan's short story was convey that government-sponsored welfare had the effect of creating an incentive for individuals to become dependent and to make poor choices. Reagan's story shows his commitment to conservative values, particularly

the conservative emphasis on governmental welfare creating a perverse consequence: e.g. to sustain dependence when the purpose of such social provisions was to allow individuals to ultimately be independent and make responsible personal choices.

Reagan echoed these earlier comments in his first inaugural speech as President of the United States on January 20th, 1981. Prior to his being elected president, the U.S. was suffering from high inflation and high unemployment. Reagan's response to these problems reveals the depth of his commitment to conservative principles (1981:75): "In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem." Reagan was committed to a populist version of conservatism; one that stressed the need for the "people" to rule as opposed to having the government – and its vast bureaucracy of elites – to rule in their stead (1981: 75-76):

> "We are a nation that has a government – not the other way around. And this makes us special among the nations of the earth. Our Government has no power except that granted to it by the people. It is time to check and reverse the growth of government which shows signs of having grown beyond the consent of the governed…it is my intention to curb the size and influence of the federal establishment and to demand recognition of the distinction between the powers granted to the Federal Government and those reserved to the states or to the people."

It is important to note that while Reagan was a strong believer in restricting the size and scope of the federal government, he still saw the need for government (1981: 76-77):

> "Now, so there will be no misunderstanding, it is not my intention to do away

> with government. It is rather to make it work – work with us, not over us; to stand by our side, not ride on our back. Government can and must provide opportunity, not smother it; foster productivity, not stifle it. If we look to the answer as to why for so many years we achieved so much, prospered as no other people on earth, it was because here in this land we unleashed the energy and individual genius of man to a greater extent than has ever been done before. Freedom and the dignity of the individual have been more available and assured here than in any other place on earth."

Reagan understood that government was needed; conservatives do recognize the value of having laws enforced by government. What he wanted was a sharply reduced government; one that would not make individual innovation difficult, nor impose heavy tax burdens that made such innovation financially lucrative.

Thus far Reagan has been portrayed as an economic conservative; one who was committed to free enterprise, individual liberty, limited government and the sanctity of private property. In addition to these values, Reagan was also committed to a certain conception of "moral order" that made his political values have substance and meaning.

In a public address he delivered on March 8th in 1983 famously labeled *The Evil Empire Speech*, Reagan specified the "moral order" he understood as underlying American society (1983: 84):

> "I want you to know that this administration is motivated by a political philosophy that sees the greatness of America in you, her people, in your families, churches, neighborhoods, communities: the institutions that foster and nourish values like concern for others and respect for the rule of law under God. Now, I

> don't have to tell you that this puts us in opposition to, or at least out of step with, a prevailing attitude of many who have turned to modern-day secularism, discarding the tried and time-tested values upon which our very civilization is based."

Reagan conceived of American society as one founded upon a deep and reverent respect for God. His understanding of this "moral order" led him to use his power as the President to address such issues as pornography, abortion and premarital sex which he perceived as activities which violated his moral conception of American society. The fact that Reagan had such a moral conception also led him to believe in evil, and he specified this evil as coming from the Soviet Union, who he understood as a society committed to State planning of the economy, totalitarianism and a rejection of a commitment to God.

Reagan, much like Goldwater, understood that governmental power had to be limited and controlled to allow for individual freedom, the development of a market economy and to help foster in individuals a desire for personal responsibility. Reagan's commitment to such ideals did not prohibit him from using his power as President to pursue policies and programs to pursue his conception of moral order, and other actors shared with President Reagan his conception of moral order.

In the work of Clare Booth Luce, a conception of "universal morality" is developed that is contrasted with what she labels as the "new morality". In her speech, *Is the New Morality Destroying America?* (1978), she defines the "universal morality" in the following way (1978: 61):

> "The 'universal morality' is based on these virtues: truthfulness, honesty, duty,

> responsibility, unselfishness, loyalty, honor, compassion and courage. As Americans, we can say proudly that the traditional moral values of our society have been a reflection, however imperfect, of this universal morality. All of our great men, all of our heroes, have been exemplars of some, if not all, of these virtues."

Luce then contrasts this with what she terms, "the new morality" (1978: 59):

> "Today there are many Americans who sincerely believe that many of our traditional moral values are "obsolete". They hold that some of them go against the laws of human nature, that others are no longer relevant to the economic and political condition of our society, that this or that so-called "traditional moral value" contravenes the individual's Constitutional freedoms and legitimate pursuit of happiness. Others believe that while a moral value system is necessary as a general guideline for societal behavior, it cannot, and should not, apply to everybody. Every person is unique; no two persons are ever in exactly the same situation or "moral bind"; circumstances alter moral cases. These persons believe, in other words, that all morals are "relative," and all ethics are "situational.""

Throughout her speech, Luce draws from historical as well as current sources to buttress her argument in a "universal morality". For Luce, this "universal morality" is then complimented by what she terms an "universal sexual morality" that contains four principles: 1) husbands must take care of their wives and children, 2) wives and children should obey their husbands and fathers, 3) spouses ought to be faithful to one another,

and 4) parents should morally train their children in the "universal morality" (Luce 1978: 66-67).

For Luce, an all important problem in American society is how to move beyond the "new morality" and reinstate the "universal morality" as well as the "universal sexual morality". The problem of the new, "value-free", "relativistic" morality is that it makes no moral claims on individuals or families at all; any type of behavior is given license and seen as good given one's own moral compass. In contrast, the "universal moralities" of Luce are timeless and promote in society a strong traditional family structure cemented by authority relationships between husbands and wives and parents and children. To the degree that society embraces her conceptions of morality, it is a society bound for moral clarity and growth; if a society pursues the "new morality" it is destined for moral degradation and decay.

In a similar vein, Phyllis Schlafly's work addresses the problem of moral decay in American society. In a speech she delivered in 1987, she argued that American public education taught children moral neutrality instead of moral certainty. As a lawyer, Schlafly was engaged in litigation aimed at removing from school textbooks and the classroom ideas and activities which made children assess their moral values. Schlafly's main concern centered on how American public education emphasized that any morality goes and denied teaching students that God created a universal moral code that all should abide by (Schlafly 1978: 100-101). Throughout her speech she mentions several school textbooks which treated moral questions as having multiple answers. A representative example comes from describing a textbook she found in Seattle, WA (1987: 102):

"[It] came right out and said that promiscuity should not be labeled good or bad,

> that premarital sexual intercourse is acceptable for both men and women, that morality is individual, it's what you think it is, that homosexuality is okay, that prostitution should be legalized, that it is not deviant for teenagers to watch others performing sex acts through binoculars or windows, that alternatives to traditional marriage such as group sex and open marriage are okay."

For Schlafly (as with Luce) morality could not be understood in "relativistic" terms: there is one morality, the morality created by God, and if public schools were prohibited from teaching this one "true" morality, schools ought to be denied the ability to teach students about "moral relativism".

The purpose of describing Luce's and Schlafly's arguments is that they show how conservatives are committed to a conception of moral order that underlies society, and gives society is structure and meaning over time. In Luce's and Schlafly's arguments, references are made to how their conceptions of morality have been historically vindicated, practiced and valued. Both intellectuals link their conception of morality to the flourishing of society, and the degree to which societies can grow, mature and develop or, deform, regress and decay depending upon the conception of morality that pervades a society's schools and other important institutions.

Critical Appraisal of the Anti-Transformative Narrative

From the arguments above, the anti-transformative narrative has two-sides. On one side is the critique of governmental interference in the market and the degree to which such interference violates individual freedom and the ability to use one's resources according to one's own ends. On the other side, the arguments of Luce and Schalfly provide a deeper understanding of morality that informs how societies ought to function,

and their conceptions indicate that individuals who abide by a "universal morality" or the dictates of God's law help to create a society that will provide the ethical basis for individual freedom and the responsibilities such freedom entails. In both cases, each reinforces the other, providing a powerful set of arguments for allowing the expansion of free-market capitalism, ending or slowing the creation of social welfare programs that degrade the very people the programs seek to help, and contracting the size and scope of government to allow for market mechanisms of profit and individual interest to develop based upon norms of hard work, personal responsibility and sacrifice.

The anti-transformative narrative is a *racial* narrative because while it recognizes that discrimination and racism do still exist, their effects on outcomes (e.g. a person's income or access to valued resources) are seen as overemphasized and used as an excuse for a lack of personal responsibility that people must develop when they make their life choices.[98] The anti-transformative narrative does not suggest that African-Americans are innately inferior, nor that they ought to be barred from being citizens, but the argument has the effect of blaming African-Americans for their own plight by discounting the degree to which racial norms and practices heavily affect the success of African-Americans in achieving their life goals. The critique leveled by actors engaged in developing the anti-transformative narrative surrounding social ills makes clear their belief that human beings are responsible for their choices, even if they are subject to discrimination or forms of oppression that (potentially) limit their choices. A belief in a

[98] Whether a commitment to the values of the anti-transformative narrative is also a commitment to racism is a difficult question to answer. The current study does not make assertions such as, "being conservative means that one is racist", for such an assertion is a gross oversimplification of what "conservatism" and "racism" mean as concepts. Instead, the current study seeks to argue that a commitment to the values of the anti-transformative narrative can have the effect of making the pursuit of racial justice through governmental action difficult to sustain, particularly if white-Americans are committed to such values.

universal and unchanging morality is also racial, if only implicitly so, in that the breakdown of the African-American family documented by scholars of African-American politics could be attributed to African-Americans not living up to their personal and ethical responsibilities as parents and models of moral behavior (for an example of such an argument, see Kristol 1971: 47-48). The emphasis on an underlying moral order to American society based upon religious prescriptions about what constitutes morality also implicates racial assumptions insofar as the religious doctrines and beliefs that have pervaded American society have been used historically to oppress African-Americans. Finally, the anti-transformative narrative, due to its emphasis on restricting welfare, limiting governmental involvement in the distribution of valued social goods, and its commitment to local political control is also racial insofar as these questions have been permeated by racial assumptions in the American context.[99]

Did the anti-transformative narrative have any political importance? So far the philosophical arguments and prescriptions of the narrative have been discussed. The political importance of this narrative must also be explicated. The best place to begin is with the election in 1980 of Ronald Reagan as President of the United States.

1980-2008: Confrontation between the NS and Anti-Transformative Narratives

Ronald Reagan's election as President in 1980 was a culmination of the social, political and economic processes of the 1970s that left the African-American liberation movement unable to deal with the factions within the movement or to help ordinary African-Americans achieve economic prosperity. In the broader social environment, a growing sense of white backlash against the various social movements in the 1960s had

[99] See the work of Tali Mendelberg (2001) who argues that questions of governmental interference in the economy, and the public provision of welfare are racialized, particularly for white Americans.

moved much of the American public to the right (Edsall and Edsall 1991). Ronald Reagan's policy agenda focused mainly on dismantling many of the reforms and changes that had been generated to deal with the poor and minorities:

> "Included within Reagan's broad assault upon the legacy of social centrist liberalism were numerous proposals: the abandonment of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act program, funded in 1981 for $3.1 billion, and the elimination of its 150,000 federally funded jobs…a $ 2 billion reduction in the federal Food Stamps Program by fiscal 1983…the reduction of $1.7 billion from child nutrition programs sponsored by the federal government by fiscal 1983; the closing of the Neighborhood Self Help and Planning Assistance programs, which allotted $55 million in fiscal 1981 to aid inner cities" (Marable 2007:178).

The changes wrought by Reagan's policy agenda of cutting spending, reducing taxes and increasing spending on defense proved extremely destructive to African-Americans in the 1980s. Within the first year of office, African-American income was reduced, the number of African-American families in poverty increased and the real median income of African-Americans dropped 5.2 percent from the previous year's figure (Marable 2007:180). The policies pursued by the Reagan Administration also had devastating impacts in other areas of African-American social and economic life, particularly after Reagan was re-elected in 1984. For example, from 1980-1986, the number of African-American college students dropped by 100,000 and the number of doctorates earned by African-Americans decreased sharply from 1,166 in 1980 to 765 in 1987 (Marable 2007: 183).[100] In terms of African-American social life and institutions,

[100] The debate surrounding the use of "race" as a factor in determining who would be admitted to educational institutions is a perfect example of the problems African-Americans had to face in seeking

Reagan's policies neglected to deal with the continuing problems of urban ghettos in America's inner cities. During the late 1970s through the mid-1980s, drug use increased dramatically in the African-American community as did violence and crime. In response, the Reagan administration began a crack down on drug use imprisoning African-American males at an alarming rate. By the end of President Reagan's second term in 1989, "approximately 609,690 African-American males between ages 20 and 29 were either behind prison bars or on legal parole or probation. This group represented 23 percent, or nearly one out of every four black American males in their twenties" (Marable 2007: 191). The problems of crime and violence experienced by African-Americans in the inner cities further created white backlash against crime, creating a strong movement on the part of white Americans to levy heavier sentences for crimes, and to expand the institutional capacity of American prisons to accommodate an increased number of offenders.

The political effect of Reagan's reactionary domestic policies was to alienate African-American voters who had become increasingly important in American electoral politics, particularly for the Democratic Party. For example, in 1986, according to one poll of African-Americans:

> "40 percent of all blacks believed that Reagan's policies had "held them back", 33 percent stated that his policies had "made no difference", while only 11 percent claimed that they had "helped". Fifty-six percent of all blacks agreed with the statement that "Ronald Regan was a racist."" (Marable 2007: 199).

While African-Americans had historically supported Republican candidates due

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education. For the pertinent U. S. Supreme Court Cases see *University of California vs. Bakke* (1978) and *Grutter vs. Bollinger* (2003).

The connection between the Republican Party and Abraham Lincoln, by the 1980s almost 86 percent of African-Americans indicated a preference for the Democratic Party which by this time had become the political party associated with welfare-state liberalism, the pursuit of equal rights, and promoting a "rights-based" agenda for racial minorities and other disadvantaged groups. The affiliation of African-Americans with the Democratic Party did not, however, mean that they unquestionably held the party line.

The best examples of African-Americans resisting the conservative agenda of Reagan and then George H.W. Bush in 1988 was the movement to end U.S. relations with the South African Apartheid government, and the presidential campaigns of Jesse Jackson in 1984 and 1988. In both cases, African-Americans collectively pursued a strategy of trying to challenge the racist conservatism of Reagan and Bush, while also articulating a political agenda that sought to fully include African-Americans in American society and the Democratic Party. For example, Jesse Jackson's policy agenda sought to reduce American defense expenditures and redirect billions of dollars to social programs designed to deal with the ongoing problems of African-American ghettos in the inner cities (Marable 2007: 212). While Jackson did not receive the nomination in either 1984 or 1988 he did garner a respectable number of votes in 1984 and 1988. The problem was that, even within the Democratic Party, African-Americans lacked the power to fully articulate an alternative agenda that could compete with the policies being pursued by white Democratic candidates.

By the dawn of the 1990s, the conservatism established by Reagan was pursued by George H.W. Bush, but Bush was relatively more liberal on questions of governmental spending in regards to social welfare programs, and helping African-

Americans achieve economic prosperity. One example of how Bush tried to appeal to the African-American community was to nominate Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1991. Thomas, a conservative, had a difficult time being confirmed since he was accused by one of his former co-workers, Anita Hill, of sexual harassment. Despite the problems Thomas faced, he was eventually confirmed and took his seat on the U.S. Supreme Court. Even though Thomas was African-American, he proved to be a controversial candidate, and in the 1992 Presidential election, Bush sought to appeal to African-American voters through signing the 1991 Civil Rights Act. Even with this gesture toward African-Americans, William Jefferson Clinton was elected president.

Bill Clinton's electoral victory in 1992 was precarious, winning only 43 % of popular vote. The major reason for Clinton's election was the overwhelming support he received from African-American voters. In 1992, 82 % of African-Americans voted for Clinton, and their votes were important in several strategic states such as Ohio, Louisiana, Tennessee and Georgia where Clinton just narrowly won over Bush (Marable 2007: 219). Throughout his two terms as President, Bill Clinton had what could be described as a difficult relationship with African-Americans. On the one hand, Clinton's choosing of prominent African-Americans to cabinet positions showed some commitment to addressing African-American concerns, but Clinton's foreign policy, particularly in regards to Rwanda had the effect of alienating some in the African-American community (Marable 2007: 218). While it is the case that by the end of his second term Clinton sought a national conversation in regards to race, Clinton's policies, particularly the 1996 reform of Welfare also hurt his relationship with the African-American community.

By the mid-1990s, African-Americans faced several challenges. First, hundreds of thousands of African-Americans were incarcerated in American jails and prisons. Violent police brutality against African-Americans (best epitomized by the 1992 beating of Rodney King) was rampant, and violence against the African-American community was on the rise (Marable 2007: 219-224). Faced with such challenges, African-Americans attempted to generate a program that would guide the African-American liberation movement into the 21st Century.

One response was the elevation of the Nation of Islam to center stage under the direction of Louis Farrahkan. While Farrahkan was a controversial figure, he was able to articulate a social program of collective community development that emphasized the need for African-American men to generate a sense of greater personal responsibility and spiritual fulfillment. In order to pursue this program, Farrahkan advocated for a "Million Man March" on Washington to show that African-American men were committed to racial solidarity. On October 16th, 1995 between 675,000 and 1.1 million African-American men marched on Washington to show America that African-American men were committed to pursuing responsibility in their social, economic and political lives (Marable 2007: 230-231). Despite the strong showing of African-American male solidarity, Farrahkan's march had created rifts within the African-American liberation movement, particularly in regards to how the ideas that informed the Million Man March ignored questions of gender equity, and the intersections between gender, race and class.

In response to such issues, the African-American Left convened the Black Radical Congress in 1998. The ideas that informed the Black Radical Congress show a commitment to the NS narrative African-Americans had developed in the 1960s

including commitments to recognizing a diversity of views within the African-American radical tradition, an acceptance of gender as a form of oppression in the African-American community, and to develop a new vision for the African-American community based not only in electoral politics but "multiple sites of struggle" (Principles 1998: 626).

With the Black Radical Congress, many African-Americans committed to leftist ideals were excited about the possibility of changing American racial relations. However, with the presidential election of George W. Bush in 2000 and then again in 2004, the social environment made it difficult for the African-American community to pursue their political agenda.

Throughout the Bush presidency, African-Americans had to face a new racial reality. With the terrorist attacks in September of 2001, American foreign policy and domestic rhetoric became more racialized and many African-Americans worried that such an environment would spawn a new era of discrimination against all people of color, not just individuals of Arab-descent (Marable 2007: 241). Beyond the racial implications of the "War on Terror" initiated by the Bush Administration in 2002, other disasters such as Hurricane Katrina revealed that many African-Americans believed the slow governmental response to the hurricane victims was due to their being black (for a review, see Haider-Markel et.al. 2007). By the dawn of the 21st century, many African-Americans still believed that American society was divided by issues of race. While the pubic discourse no longer stressed African-American inferiority, African-Americans still lacked access to vital economic resources. While African-Americans had developed new movements in the 1990s to combat the continuing presence of racism and discrimination

in American society, by the end of President Bush's second term, American political, social and economic life was still significantly structured by race, class and gender.

By the presidential election of 2008, an African-American man, Barack Hussein Obama was chosen as the Democratic presidential candidate. Throughout his campaign, Obama emphasized his commitment to the middle-class and bringing change to Washington, D.C. through bipartisanship. The mere fact that an African-American male had been nominated was phenomenal and was a new milestone in white American and African-American relations. The crowning moment came however when he was elected President of the United States in November of 2008. The election of an African-American man to the Presidency in many respects represents the hard work and organizing that African-Americans had done from the founding of the American republic to have African-Americans seen by white America as deserving of equal worth and value. While President Obama has yet, as of this writing, to propose policies that benefit the African-American community specifically, it is important to note that his major domestic policy issue, the reforming of the U.S. healthcare system, has the potential to affect African-Americans in a profound way, especially if the reforms of the healthcare system provide greater access to healthcare at a lower cost. President Obama has many challenges before him, and only time will tell if he will be the national leader that African-Americans so desperately need as they continue their struggle for liberation in American society.

Conclusion

The current chapter has attempted to show the development of a NS narrative that began in the mid-1960s as a reaction to the slow pace of changes that were occurring in

American society regarding the status of African-Americans. As this narrative developed, internal divisions among the actors did generate differences in the type of tactics that ought to be employed in order for African-Americans to achieve liberation. Nevertheless, the ideas and arguments developed in this narrative provided a strong foundation upon which African-Americans built organizations (such as the Black Panther Party, the OAAU and SNCC post -1966), developed a strong collective identity, and began to engage in electoral politics in earnest to pursue their collective ends.

Yet, as early as the 1950s, another narrative, the anti-transformative narrative began to develop. It developed an egalitarian-conservatism that emphasized humans were most free when engaged in voluntary economic activity in the marketplace. In order to provide a moral foundation for the emerging anti-transformative narrative, conservative scholars and intellectuals began to show the weaknesses associated with the expansion of the welfare state in the 1960s, and their critiques suggested that the reasons for the welfare state – to end dependence and to help the poor and disadvantaged to lead better lives – were undercut by the pathologies that resulted from social welfare polices and programs. The anti-transformative narrative while not discussing "race" overtly, relied upon implicit racial arguments surrounding the lack of personal responsibility on the part of African-Americans, their criminality, and their lack of moral behavior.

By the 1980s, the anti-transformative narrative became politically important, particularly with the election of Ronald Reagan as president in 1980 and 1984 followed by the election of George H.W. Bush as president in 1988. Even with a shift in power at the presidential level with the election of Bill Clinton as president, the anti-transformative narrative still held sway. By 2008, with the election of President Barack Obama, the first

African-American to be elected president, a new racial narrative may be developing. Only time will tell if Obama will help usher in for African-Americans a period of political power, social recognition and economic advancement based on a deeper commitment to the freedom and equality of African-Americans in American society.

Chapter 6:
Black Nationalism, Racial Identity and African-American Political Participation

Drawing from the historical analysis completed in chapter 5, the current chapter will test some of the theoretical (and empirical) implications of that chapter's analysis. The current chapter estimates several statistical models that show how a commitment to Black Nationalism and the strength of an individual's racial group identification affects the probability of African-Americans participating in various forms of political activity.[101] Scholars working in racial politics suggest that the ideas and arguments articulated by the Black Nationalism movement do indeed structure and affect African-American political behavior as does an individual's strength of racial group identification (Dawson 2001: 85-134). The goal is to show how, and in what ways, the ideas and arguments of the Black Nationalism movement (conditioned by an individual's strength of racial identity) affect African-American political participation.

Theoretical Orientation[102]

A narrative model of political behavior begins with the assumption that actors through their interaction construct social reality (see Searle 1995). "Race" is a social construction; the social expectations and norms about what constitutes "race" are important for understanding African-American political behavior. "Race" is understood as an outcome of the repeated social relationships forged between actors and how the

[101] Black Nationalism is not necessarily a racial narrative per se. Rather, it is a variant of the broader nationalist-solidarist racial narrative. Black Nationalism can be understood as a "sub-narrative" within the larger nationalist-solidarist narrative. Thus, Black Nationalism is used as a way to link the theoretical concept of the nationalist-solidarist racial narrative to African-American political activity.

[102] While the theoretical orientation of the current study is fully developed in chapter 2, it is useful to review the basics of the theoretical model here to show how the model is linked to the statistical model developed in this chapter.

expectations that flow from these relationships inform institutional development and outcomes.

The emphasis on the social construction of reality in general, and "race" in particular allows for the focus on a narrative model of political behavior. The central concept developed to explain and understand African-American political behavior, narrative, presupposes a constructive process whereby norms, social practices, and institutions are interrelated.

Recall that narratives are "stories" made up of at least two components: a plot and the actors involved in a particular plot. Narratives structure social, political, and economic life by linking together various arguments, ideas and discourses that constitute a plot, and the actors who are involved in the creation of particular plots. It is the ability of narratives to link plots and actors together that allows them to be used by individuals to render their action intelligible or meaningful. The emphasis in the literature dealing with narratives consistently stresses the need for intelligibility as a prerequisite for action (White 1987; Lemon 2001; Kohler-Riessman 1993: 9).

The central theoretical argument is as follows: agents, if they are to act in the world, need some way of rendering their various activities meaningful or intelligible. This need for intelligibility presupposes the existence of a set of events that are linked together: "this happened then that" (Lemon 2001: 107). The idea is that agents act not *because* of some stimuli, which implies a causal relationship between stimuli and the resulting action, but in *response to* situations and occurrences. Agents' activities are not determinately caused, but rather are an *appropriate* response given particular situations. Actors act because of the perceived intersection between the situation they face and how

they ought to respond to it. Actors in this sense are reasoning agents; they do not act blindly (Giddens 1984: 35-36).

Given that agents' actions are perceived as appropriate responses to particular situations, why are certain responses deemed appropriate whereas others are not? Agents are historically constituted: how they understand particular situations is conditioned by the context in which they find themselves (Taylor 1989:25-26) and the interrelationships between events and their social context. The literature dealing with narrative suggests that agents' actions are rendered intelligible and therefore appropriate given the plots that they find themselves in (MacIntyre 1984: 28).

Plots and Narration

Human action is understood by the relationships forged between events and their interrelationships with one another. Plots therefore can be defined as the sequential ordering of events. A particular plot is an ordered response to the human need to narrate or "tell" a particular story about social life. The sequences of events that define particular plots lack meaning or intelligibility unless actors can see the continuity that is provided by plots for human activity. This is not to suggest a deterministic rendering of plots in that the stories humans articulate are always characterized by a particular form of order, but rather to suggest that humans do require some semblance of continuity between events to act in the world.

Despite the emphasis upon continuity that underlies the theoretical concept of a plot, it is important to recognize that plots can, and indeed, do change. This, of course, creates a conundrum: if humans use narratives (defined by plots) to provide continuity, what happens when narratives change as a result of their being challenged?

When narratives change (as a result of their being challenged), new plots emerge that help to render social and political life meaningful. The emergence of new plots also suggests a new set of actors who articulate alternative understandings of social life. These new plots are expressed within larger narratives that enable continuity as well as change in social action. When narratives change, we are likely to see actors challenging and articulating alternative narratives to provide a new sense of order and continuity to social life. The specific actors involved in the generation of a new plot matters: the social, political and economic power of narratives are linked to the actors who create and sustain them. The generation of alternative narratives depends upon the ability of actors to articulate a theme, or common source of meaning for interpreting sequential events that can disrupt the commonly-assumed metrics of "what criteria will be used to prioritize events and render meaning to them" (Somers 2001: 362). Narratives are the result of actors generating their own social world in concert with others, and they are created (and challenged) via social practices that can affect the actions of individuals (and groups).

Narrative and Social Identity

While the theoretical argument developed about how narratives are structured is important, how do actors link narratives and action? One useful way to see this nexus is an emphasis on the social identity that is created by the narratives actors utilize to render the world meaningful and intelligible. Of importance here is how narratives inform and constitute the historical consciousness of actors (or groups of actors) as they try to make sense of the social world in which they operate.

It is not simply the presence of narratives that inform the activities of actors: it is the presence of specific narratives that provide meaning and order to social life.

Narratives provide meaning to human life because they inform actors' perceptions of themselves and others: "we are this, others are that." Narratives operate as constitutive mechanisms for human understanding; they help to define who we are and therefore are ontological in the sense that what it means to be a particular sort of person is dependent upon the specific narrative that informs how actors think of themselves (Carr 2001: 198-199). As one scholar notes: "locating ourselves in narratives endows us with identities…. To have some sense of social being in the world requires that our lives be more than isolated events. People act, or do not act, in part according to how they understand their place in any number of given narratives—however fragmented, contradictory or partial" (Somers 2001: 362). Narratives help to constitute actors' social identities; who they perceive themselves to be and not be.

If we assume that agents seek meaning for their activities through narratives that are structured by plots (which provide a sense of "personhood" or identity), what types of narratives might be important for understanding the political behavior of African-Americans?

Public Narrative

There are many forms of narrative, but the current study emphasizes what is termed in the literature as a public narrative. As one scholar notes, public narratives, "are those narratives attached to 'publics', to a structural formation larger than the single individual, to intersubjective networks or institutions, however local or grand, micro or macro" (Somers 2001: 363). Emphasizing this type of narrative is warranted because the current study is less concerned with the particular narratives of individuals and more focused upon the social construction of "race" in American social, political and economic

life. The current study seeks to describe and articulate broader racial narratives that have been created and forged through interpersonal and institutional interaction. A racial narrative can be defined as a "story" which links together racial norms, social practices, and institutions via particular plots about "race" in social life. While this conceptual definition is fairly broad, it is argued that black nationalism is an important plot for the "story" of "race" in American politics.[103]

Black Nationalism and African-American Political Behavior

Despite a rejection of American social, economic and political institutions by some in the Black Nationalist movement, Black Nationalism still informs African-American political behavior by stressing African-American self-reliance *and* engaging with the American political system as a means to pursue African-American political, cultural, and economic needs (Dawson 2001: 118).[104] Analysis of African-American public opinion shows a commitment to developing African-American social and political power through political participation (Dawson 2001; Tate 1993). The nexus between developing African-American social and political power and political participation is crucial, as it suggests that African-Americans see a need to engage in political activity to pursue their interests as a group. In the past the goals of self-reliance and political participation in American politics were suggested to be antithetical by black nationalists in that participating in racist institutions undermined the ability of African-Americans to have their own social, political, cultural and economic institutions. Current empirical

[103] For a review of Black Nationalism and its role in the nationalist-solidarist narrative, see chapter 5.
[104] It is important to note that not all African-Americans are committed to the black nationalist narrative. Instead, the current chapter argues that African-American political participation is affected by the degree to which African-Americans accept this narrative.

evidence indicates African-Americans now see the need to be active in American society for the pursuit of group goals.

While African-Americans see a need to be politically active, a commitment to black nationalism implies a desire for African-Americans to be socially and politically independent (Tate 1993: 151).[105] Because of this desire to be independent, it is important to make distinctions between different types of political activity, and the degree to which certain activities afford greater independence than others. Certain forms of political activity, such as voting, or engaging in campaign-related activities allow African-Americans to pursue their group interests through the election of candidates that support such interests. The problem is that African-Americans still perceive American society and its institutions to be exclusionary and discriminatory towards their interests.[106] Therefore, some scholars have suggested that in order for African-Americans to change the American political system and to pursue racial equality, other forms of political participation ought to be pursued, particularly those forms which exist outside of institutional political activity (Tate 1993: 175-176).[107] The emphasis on extra-institutional forms of political activity[108] flows from the importance of African-American social and political independence implicit in black nationalist ideas and arguments: African-Americans can change American society without having to accept the institutional

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[105] See Dawson (2001: 122-123, 361) for a description of what he terms "Black Autonomy".
[106] Because American social, political and economic institutions are still perceived as permeated by racism and racial inequality, the viability of engaging in traditional forms of political participation for the pursuit of more radical transformations towards racial equality is questionable given the constraints imposed by such forms of participation.
[107] Institutional political activities include: voting, contacting elected representatives, engaging in voter registration drives, giving money to political candidates, engaging in fundraising for candidates, campaigning for Black candidates, engaging in campaign activities and handing out campaign materials.
[108] Extra-institutional forms of political activity are those practices that lack an institutional basis in electoral politics. For the purposes of this study, these forms of political activity include: marching, protesting, picketing, signing a petition, and being a member of an organization which seeks to benefit African-Americans.

constraints imposed by other forms of political activity. Therefore, a commitment to black nationalism also provides a foundation for seeing the value in pursuing non-electoral forms of political activity.

In sum, black nationalism is a powerful narrative that links together racial norms, social practices as well as social and political institutions through a plot that stresses African-American social, economic and political inequality in U.S. society and the concomitant need to generate African-American social and political power that can help African-Americans as a group. Following the theoretical discussion above, the articulation of a uniquely "black" conception of the shared experiences of African-Americans as a group ought to have an important effect on African-American political behavior. A commitment to black nationalism indicates that African-Americans who see group-based social and political power (and its institutional manifestations) as important ought to be less likely to participate politically in institutional activities (such as voting or being active in electoral campaigns) as opposed to extra-institutional forms of political participation (such as protesting or marching).[109]

The critical insight of this analysis is that the relationship between a commitment to black nationalism and African-American political activity is *conditioned* by an individual's strength of racial group identification. The assumption is that those individuals who a have a strong sense of racial identity see the need to be engaged politically to help African-Americans as a group to achieve their social and political

[109] It is important to note that some scholars suggest a commitment to Black Nationalism leads to a recognition on the part of African-Americans that voting and engaging in electoral politics is a means to secure political, social and economic power for African-Americans as a group (Dawson 2001: 118-120). Yet, given the constraints imposed on African-Americans by engaging in electoral politics, this study argues that a commitment to Black Nationalism can lead to a desire for fundamental social, political and economic change that is difficult to pursue through electoral politics.

goals. The literature on black nationalism suggests that a commitment to the tenets of black nationalism can mobilize African-Americans to engage in electoral politics, and it can also create a desire to engage in extra-institutional forms of political participation. By analyzing a variety of political activities, the debate in the literature on black nationalism and African-American political participation can be examined and expanded through emphasizing the conditioning role of racial group identification. Because of the divergent conclusions regarding black nationalism and African-American political participation, two central hypotheses are tested in this chapter.

The first hypothesis tests the arguments developed by scholars who suggest that a commitment to black nationalism and a strong racial group identity can lead to a desire to engage in electoral politics. The second hypothesis seeks to extend the literature concerning African-American political participation by arguing that a commitment to black nationalism and a strong racial group identity can lead to a desire to engage in extra-institutional forms of political participation. Thus, the chapter tests two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: African-Americans who strongly identify with their racial group and who agree with the tenets of black nationalism are more likely to engage in institutional forms of political participation than those African-Americans who weakly identify with their racial group and who disagree with the tenets of black nationalism.

Hypothesis 2: African-Americans who strongly identify with their racial group and who agree with the tenets of black nationalism are more likely to engage in extra-institutional forms of political participation than those African-Americans who weakly identify with their racial group and who disagree with the tenets of black nationalism.

Data and Methodology

In order to test the above hypotheses, survey data is used from the National Black Politics Study (NBPS) of 1993 and the National Black Election Study (NBES) of 1996

(Dawson et. al. 1993; Tate 1998). The NBPS of 1993 was a multi-frame telephone survey. The first frame was derived from a national random-digit sample allowing for an equal selection of any African-American household in the U.S. The second frame employed random digit-dialing of U.S. Census blocks constituted by 50% or more of African-American households. The NBES of 1996 was a telephone survey conducted in two waves; wave one was finished just prior to the presidential election of 1996 and the other wave was completed shortly after the presidential election of 1996. The total N for the NBPS of 1993 is 1206, and the total N for the NBES of 1996 is 1216. The current chapter analyzes these surveys independently, and the average number of cases for the models utilizing data from the NBPS of 1993 is 791, whereas the average number of cases for the models utilizing data from the NBES of 1996 is 751.[110]

In order to better understand the models presented below, as well as the description of the underlying data used for this study, it is important to describe in detail the independent and dependent variables used for the statistical analysis. Of particular importance is specifying how the key independent variables fit with the theoretical argument explicated above, and the degree to which the measures used correspond with existing literature on African-American political participation.

Independent Variables

The purpose of the quantitative analysis is to estimate several statistical models of African-American political participation. There are two key independent variables in this study. The first independent variable is operationalized via survey questions found in the

[110] The reduction in effective number of cases in each survey is due to missing values for respondents on the survey questions utilized in each model. Responses such as "don't know" or "refused" were also taken out of the analysis. In the case of the NBES of 1996, survey questions were used from the post-election wave where only 854 respondents were re-interviewed, further reducing the effective number of cases.

NBPS of 1993 and the NBES of 1996. In the NBPS of 1993, the first variable is labeled "Black Political Power". This question asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "blacks should have control over the government in mostly black communities". In the NBES of 1996, a parallel variable is used which I label "AfroCentric". This question asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "Blacks should attend Afro-Centric schools". These independent variables are chosen as measures of black nationalism and are an operationalization of the black nationalist "story" that is theoretically argued to affect African-American political participation. These are excellent measures for a variety of reasons.

First, the variables make specific reference to African-Americans as a group, which is important for the theoretical suggestion that African-Americans, as a group, share common experiences in American social life. The variables imply a group-orientation to respondent opinion on these questions.

Secondly, the variables tap into ideas and arguments that have been articulated by African-American social movements, most notably the black nationalism movement. The value of these variables comes from the questions asking respondents to give their opinion on the need for African-Americans to control political power within their own communities and to develop their own social organizations such as schools. These are crucial ideas that inform the black nationalist desire for gaining and wielding political control of predominately African-American communities, as well as developing African-American oriented social organizations.

Finally, other scholars in the racial politics literature have used these variables to conceptually define what is meant by black nationalism (Dawson 2001: 361). Because

black nationalism emphasizes the independence of African-Americans, a desire to control political power within African-American communities, and a desire to create institutions that reflect African-American values, the use of the "Black Political Power" and "AfroCentric" variables tap into the conceptual foundations of black nationalism.

A second independent variable measuring racial group identity was available and is used in both the 1993 NBPS and the 1996 NBES surveys: in each"Racial Identity" is operationalized by respondents' agreement or disagreement with the statement, "Do you think that what happens generally to black people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?" This measure is used because it relates group and individual interests, and it is utilized in the literature dealing with race consciousness (Tate 1991: 1166). This measure is also used because other scholars use a similar measure in work dealing with African-American conceptions of "linked fate" (Dawson 1994; 2001).

In the literature, African-Americans have been found to perceive a strong in-group identity, or a belief that what happens to African-Americans generally will impact the lives of individual African-Americans (Dawson 1994). The theoretical importance of "linked fate" is that it indicates African-Americans have a shared set of expectations, norms and values in regards to their understandings of African-American racial group interests. These shared set of expectations, norms and values come from their social, political and economic place in American society, and the common experiences African-Americans have as individuals and as a group.

Per the theoretical discussion above, the variables for black nationalism ("Black Political Power" and "AfroCentric") are interacted with "Racial Identity" to show the

conditional effects of a commitment to Black Nationalism and a respondent's strength of racial identity on African-American political participation.[111]

Dependent Variables: Measures of Political Participation

The dependent variables used in this chapter provide a variety of measures of African-American political behavior, and are measured in both surveys by a battery of questions posed to respondents such as, "did you vote in the 1992 presidential election?", "have you helped in a voter registration drive?" and so on down to more extra-institutional activities such as, "have you signed a petition in support of something or against something?" From the NBPS of 1993 and the NBES of 1996, several measures of institutional and extra-institutional political participation are used, and all of the dependent variables are dummy measures where 0 indicates not participating in the political activity and 1 indicates participation in the political activity. Because the dependent variables are dichotomous, logistic regression is used to perform the statistical analysis.[112]

Control Variables

The control variables utilized in the statistical models come from the literature in American political science concerning what is likely to affect political participation (for general reviews, see Schlozman 2002; Verba and Nie 1972; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba et. al. 1995: 269-416; for reviews of African-American political participation, see Dawson 1994, 2001; Tate 1991, 1993; Olsen 1970; Miller et. al. 1981).

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[111] Some scholars, such as Michael Dawson, have created an index of "Black Autonomy" using the "Black Political Power" variable and three others, including a measure that assesses whether a respondent agrees that African-Americans should attend all black academies. His index was replicated and used in statistical models predicting African-American political participation. When it was interacted with Racial Identity, it did not provide any increased explanatory power for modeling African-American political participation. Thus, the single measures are used in the estimated statistical models.

[112] For reviews of the logistic regression model, see Long 1997 and King 1998.

Thus, I include traditional demographic variables: education, which in the NBPS of 1993 was measured by the number of years a respondent attended school. In the NBES of 1996 education was measured by the highest degree a respondent has acquired. The education variable is a surrogate measure of socio-economic status that has been shown to affect political participation. I also include gender, measured in both the NBPS of 1993 and the NBES of 1996 as a dummy variable with male coded "1". Also included are behavioral and attitudinal measures that the literature has linked to African-American participation. In the NBPS of 1993 and the NBES of 1996, the "Black Church" variable assesses whether or not a respondent has heard any political discussions in their place of worship or believes that churches should be involved in political matters. In the NBPS of 1993, "Fairness" assesses whether the respondent believes American society is fair to everyone, or is unfair to African-Americans, and in the NBES of 1996 "Political Trust" assesses how much of the time a respondent agrees that they can trust the national government to do what is right. Finally, measures of African-American information sources are included. In the NBPS of 1993, "Black Newspaper" assesses whether a respondent reads a black newspaper, and in the NBES of 1996, "Networks" assesses whether a respondent discusses politics with their family or friends. [113]

The distributions of the key independent and control variables are presented in Table 1a and Table 2a, and the distributions of the dependent variables are presented in

[113] It is important to note that the assumed directionality of causality might be different for the variables assessing African-American information sources. The presumption is that access to information sources would decrease the costs associated with political activity, thus enabling participation. On the other hand, participation itself might lead African-Americans to seek out sources of information, whether that information comes from black newspapers or from discussing politics with friends. The disentangling of causality is difficult, and it might be the case that information and participation are involved in reciprocal causation: information increases participation and participation therefore increases a desire to seek out more information, creating a positive feedback mechanism.

Table 1b and Table 2b.[114] Looking at the first set of tables, we see that 65% of the sample agrees that African-Americans should have control over the government in mostly Black communities, but only 23% agree that African-Americans should attend Afro-centric schools. The differences in agreement for African-Americans on these two measures is difficult to interpret, but weak agreement in the NBES sample for Afro-centric schools might be due to the explicitly separatist emphasis of the variable; African-Americans conceivably could believe in local control of black communities by African-Americans and still see the need for the integration of these communities into American society whereas a commitment to Afro-centric schools denies the need for integration. As was shown in chapter 5, black nationalist political thought has struggled with whether integration or separatism is the best way to achieve African-American agency in American politics, and the differences in these two variables might be a reflection of this struggle.

We also see from our measures of racial identity that 75% and 78% of our samples have strong racial group identification. These results match existing literature on racial group identification among African-Americans (Miller et. al. 1981). Overall, a large proportion of the respondents in the NBPS of 1993 are committed to black nationalism (as indicated by their support for Black Political Power), but only a small portion are so committed in the NBES of 1996 (as indicated by their weak support for Afro-centric schools). Despite this difference in commitment to black nationalism, in both samples we do see evidence of strong racial group identification.

[114] Tables 1a, 1b, 1c, and 1d correspond to the NBPS of 1993. Tables 2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d correspond to the NBES of 1996.

As for the control variables, we can see that the respondents in the NBPS sample are a little more than 1/3rd male, and have a bit more than high school education. Almost half of the respondents report hearing political discussions at their place of worship while a little more than half (55%) of the respondents report reading a black newspaper. Finally, only 16% of the respondents believe that American society is fair to everyone.

In the NBES sample, about 1/3rd of the respondents are male, and are better educated. A little less than half of the respondents (45%) agree that churches should be involved in political matters, while 73% of the respondents report discussing politics with friends or family. Finally, the respondents only marginally trust the national government to do what is right.

If we look at the dependent variables presented in Tables 1b and 2b, patterns in the distribution of respondents across the dependent variables in both samples arise. In general, the more costly the political activity, fewer respondents engage in it.[115] For example, in the NBPS sample, 80% of respondents indicate voting in the 1992 presidential election, while only 35% indicate they contacted their elected representatives or public agencies. The difference in the percentages of respondents engaging in voting vs. contacting representatives suggests that contacting is a form of political participation that falls between institutional participation (which focuses upon elections) and extra-institutional participation (that focuses on seeking redresses of grievances). Contacting could be measuring many sorts of activities: (1) seeking information from an elected official, (2) complaining to an agency about governmental services, or (3) to express a much greater grievance. In any case, contacting is more costly because citizens have to

[115] The costs associated with political participation vary by the *mode* and *type* of participation. Thus, different *modes* of participation (such as voting vs. contacting) and different *types* of participation (institutional vs. extra-institutional) are likely to create different costs for citizens.

use their time and resources to call or visit their elected officials or governmental agencies, and thus is less frequently done than voting.[116]

For extra-institutional forms of political activity the pattern holds especially well. In the NBES sample, 30% of respondents indicate they are a member of an organization seeking to better African-Americans, while only 11% of respondents indicate picketing. To take another example: 53% of respondents report signing a petition, while only 18% indicate engaging in protests. The distribution of respondents in the samples indicates that engaging in costly forms of political activity (be they institutional or extra-institutional) has a depressing effect on whether or not a respondent will engage in the indicated activity.

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[116] To better reflect this argument, please see Tables 1c and 2c where "contacting" is placed between institutional and extra-institutional forms of political participation.

Table 1a: Percentage of Respondents for the Independent and Control Variables: NBPS 1993

Independent Variables	**Percent Agreement**
Black Political Power "Blacks should have control over the government in mostly black communities."	**65%**
Racial Identity "Do you think what happens generally to black people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?"	**75%**
Control Variables	
Gender "Are you Male?"	**35%**
Education "What is the highest grade of school or year of college you have completed?"	**13***
Black Church "In the last year, have you heard any discussions of politics at your church or place of worship?"	**48%**
Fairness Do you think that the statement, "American society is fair to everyone," is more true than the statement, "American society is unfair to black people?"	**16%**
Black Newspaper "Do you read a black newspaper?"	**55%**

Source: NBPS 1993

* For the education control variable, the reported "13" is the median value on this interval scale and indicates an average of 13 years of educational attachment for the African-Americans surveyed in the NBPS.

Table 1b: Percentages of Respondents for the Dependent Variables: NBPS 1993

Dependent Variables	Percent "yes"
Vote "Did you vote in the 1992 presidential election?"	**80%**
Voter Registration "Have you helped in a voter registration drive?"	**23%**
Giving Money "Have you given money to a political candidate?"	**24%**
Fundraiser "Have you attended a fundraiser for a candidate?"	**27%**
Campaign Materials "Have you handed out campaign material or placed campaign material on cars?"	**23%**
Contact "Have you contacted a public official or agency?"	**35%**
Petition "Have you signed a petition in support of something or against something?"	**60%**
Member "Are you a member of any organization working to improve the status of black Americans?"	**30%**
Protest "Have you attended a protest meeting or demonstration?"	**29%**
March "Have you taken part in a neighborhood march?"	**23%**

Source: NBPS 1993

Table 2a: Percentages of Respondents for the Independent and Control Variables: NBES 1996

Independent Variables	**Percent Agreement**
AfroCentric "Blacks should attend Afro-Centric schools."	**23%**
Racial Identity "Do you agree that what happens generally to black people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?"	**78%**
Control Variables	
Gender "Are you male?"	**36%**
Education "What is the highest grade of school or year of college you have completed?"	**4***
Black Church "Do you agree that churches or places of worship should be involved in political matters?"	**45%**
Political Trust "How much of the time do you agree you can trust the Government in Washington to do what is right?"	**3****
Networks "I discuss politics with my family and friends."	**73%**

Source: NBES 1996

* For the education control variable, the reported "4" is the median value on this interval scale and indicates "some college, no degree".

** For the political trust control variable, the reported "3" is the median value on this interval scale and indicates "only some of the time".

Table 2b: Percentage of Respondents for the Dependent Variables: NBES 1996*

Dependent Variables	Percent "yes"
Voter Registration "Did you help with a voter registration drive or help get people to the polls on election day?"	**19%**
Give Money "Did you give money to a political party during this election year?"	**9%**
Campaign Activity "(During the election) did you go to political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners or things like that in support of a particular candidate?"	**14%**
Black Candidate "During this election year, did you help campaign for a black Candidate?"	**10%**
Contact "Have you contacted a public official or agency?"	**25%**
Petition "Have you signed a petition in support of something or against something?"	**53%**
Member "Are you a member of any organization working to improve the status of Black Americans?"	**30%**
Protest "Have you attended a protest meeting or a demonstration?"	**18%**
Picket "Have you picketed, taken part in a sit-in, or boycotted a business or government agency?"	**11%**

Source: NBES 1996
* Due to a lack of variation in the NBES sample for the vote variable – only 5 respondents indicated not voting – it is excluded from the analysis.

Testing the Hypotheses

Models

Logistic regression was used to analyze the effects of attitudes about Black Nationalism on various forms of political participation, conditioned by a respondent's strength of racial group identity. The results are shown in Tables 1c and 2c (which are presented at the end of this chapter) and that display the logit coefficients and (in parentheses) the associated standard errors for the NBPS sample and the NBES sample. [117] The results are complex. We see, for example, that some of the control variables are stronger predictors of African-American political participation than our measures of Black Nationalism and racial group identity. For example, in Table 1c, the more education a respondent has, the more likely they are to engage in voter registration drives, to give money to candidates, to contact their elected representatives, to be a member of an organization that seeks to help African-Americans and to engage in protest. These results match with the political participation literature that emphasizes the mobilizing effects of higher levels of education on a variety of political activities. In Table 2c, education is also an important predictor. The more education a respondent has, the more likely they are to engage in voter registration drives, give money to candidates, campaign for a black candidate, contact their elected representatives, to sign petitions, to be a member of an organization seeking to better African-Americans, and to engage in protesting as well as picketing.

[117] The statistical results presented in Tables 1c and 2c are generated by using the Zelig program in the R statistical package for LR. For the Zelig program, see Kosuke Imai, Gary King, and Olivia Lau. 2009. "Zelig: Everyone's Statistical Software," http://gking.harvard.edu/zelig. For the LR function in Zelig, see, Kosuke Imai, Gary King, and Oliva Lau. 2007. "logit: Logistic Regression for Dependent Variables with Binary Values" in Kosuke Imai, Gary King, and Olivia Lau, "Zelig: Everyone's Statistical Software," http://gking.harvard.edu/zelig.

Other control variables are also important predictors of African-American political participation. For example, in Table 1c, being male increases the likelihood of engaging in voter registration drives, giving money to candidates, attending fundraisers and engaging in protest. We also see in Table 1c that whether or not a respondent has heard political discussions in their place of worship is a strong predictor of participation across all types of participation.

In Table 2c, we see that being involved in political discussions with friends has a strong, positive impact on the likelihood of engaging in all forms of political participation except campaigning for a black candidate. Finally, believing that churches should be involved in political matters increases the likelihood of engaging in campaign activities, being a member of an organization seeking to help African-Americans, and engaging in protest.

Black Political Power and Racial Identity in Table 1c and AfroCentric and Racial Identity in Table 2c are important stimulants of certain political behaviors. In Table 1c, these include: voting, attending fundraisers, contacting an elected representative, petitioning, and engaging in neighborhood marches. In Table 2c, these forms of participation include: campaigning for a black candidate, contacting elected representatives, being a member of an organization seeking to help African-Americans and engaging in picketing. But, the interaction of Black Political Power and Racial Identity in Table 1c and AfroCentric and Racial Identity in Table 2c are not statistically significant. There is, however, another way to get at these interactive effects: to present the change in predicted probabilities of engaging in those forms of participation that are affected by Black Political Power and Racial Identity found in Table 1c and AfroCentric

and Racial identity found in Table 2c as the values of the substantively important independent variables vary.

Substantive Results

The predicted probabilities for the forms of participation are presented below in Tables 1d and 2d.[118]

[118] Note: the values of the independent variables for generating the predicted probabilities in Tables 1d and 2d are as follows. For Table 1d: Intercept (1), Black Political Power (1, 0), Racial Identity (1, 0), Gender =1, Education =13.07, Black Church =1, Fairness = 1, Black Newspaper =1, Black Political Party*Racial Identity (1, 0 * 1, 0). For Table 2d: Intercept (1), AfroCentric (1,0), Racial Identity (1,0), Gender=1, Education= 4.233, Black Church =1, Political Trust = 3.222, Networks =1, AfroCentric*Racial Identity (1, 0*1, 0). The choice of setting these variables to the above values flows from research into African-American political behavior (Dawson 1994; 2001; Tate 1993).

Table 1d: Predicted Probabilities of African-American Political Participation: NBPS 1993

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1. Voting Participation

Black Political Power

Racial Identity	Agree	Disagree
Strong	**.81**	.74
Weak	.84	**.85**

2. Fundraising Participation

Black Political Power

Racial Identity	Agree	Disagree
Strong	**.56**	.53
Weak	.55	**.34**

3. Contacting Participation

Black Political Power

Racial Identity	Agree	Disagree
Strong	**.47**	.43
Weak	.59	**.36**

4. Petitioning Participation

Black Political Power

Racial Identity	Agree	Disagree
Strong	**.65**	.54
Weak	.55	**.29**

5. Marching Participation

Black Political Power

Racial Identity	Agree	Disagree
Strong	**.35**	.33
Weak	.28	**.47**

Source: NBPS 1993

Table 2d: Predicted Probabilities of African-American Political Participation: NBES 1996

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1. Black Candidate Participation

AfroCentric

Racial Identity	Agree	Disagree
Strong	**.19**	.13
Weak	.35	**.06**

2. Contacting Participation

AfroCentric

Racial Identity	Agree	Disagree
Strong	**.45**	.47
Weak	.53	**.27**

3. Member Participation

AfroCentric

Racial Identity	Agree	Disagree
Strong	**.53**	.48
Weak	.15	**.48**

4. Picketing Participation

AfroCentric

Racial Identity	Agree	Disagree
Strong	**.12**	.09
Weak	.14	**.04**

Source: NBES 1996

The results of Tables 1d and 2d provide support for hypotheses 1 and 2. The best way to deal with the results shown in Table 1d and 2d is to discuss institutional forms of political participation, and then to discuss extra-institutional forms of political participation.

Institutional Forms of Political Participation

Recall hypothesis 1 indicates that those African-Americans who strongly identify with their racial group and who agree with the tenets of Black Nationalism ought to be more likely to engage in institutional forms of political participation than those African-Americans who weakly identify with their group and who disagree with the tenets of Black Nationalism. From Table 1d, there is support for this hypothesis. When we look at the forms of institutional political participation (excluding voting), the results indicate that when an African-American strongly identifies with their racial group and they agree that African-Americans should have political power, they are more likely to engage in fundraising and contact elected representatives than those who weakly identify with their racial group and who disagree that African-Americans ought to have political power. Interestingly, the opposite occurs for voting, but the differences between the two groups of respondents are small, .81 and .85 respectively. Thus, the theory (and empirical evidence) does not help to explain voting behavior.

In Table 2d, there is also support for hypothesis 1: those African-Americans who strongly identify with their racial group and who agree that African-Americans should attend Afro-centric schools are more likely to engage in institutional forms of political participation, particularly campaigning for a black candidate and contacting their elected

representatives. The results indicate that when taking into account the *conditioning* effect of African-Americans' strength of racial group identification, African-Americans who agree with some tenets of Black Nationalism are mobilized for institutional political participation. This confirms empirical research done by other scholars dealing with Black Nationalism, racial identity and African-American political participation. The results also confirm the first hypothesis of this chapter.

It is also important to note that for contacting elected representatives, those African-Americans who have a low commitment to the tenets of Black Nationalism and who have weak racial group identification are also less likely to contact their elected representatives and other government agencies. This result affirms the theoretical argument of the current chapter: when African-Americans have a weak commitment to Black Nationalism and a weak racial group identity they are less likely to be active in pursuing institutional forms of political participation.[119]

Extra-Institutional Political Participation

Recall hypothesis 2 which indicates that African-Americans who strongly identify with their racial group and who believe in the tenets of Black Nationalism ought to be more likely to engage in extra-institutional forms of political participation. If we look at Table 1d, the predicted probabilities for signing petitions do confirm hypothesis 2: when African-Americans have a strong group identity and agree with the tenets of Black Nationalism, they have a .65 predicted probability of signing a petition which contrasts with the .29 predicted probability of signing a petition for African-Americans who have a weak group identity and disagree that African-Americans ought to have political power.

[119] The current chapter treats contacting elected representatives as an institutional form of political participation, but it is important to note one caveat: contacting elected representatives seems to be a quasi-institutional and extra-institutional form of political participation.

One question that arises is the degree to which signing a petition is an institutional or extra-institutional form of political participation. The current chapter argues that signing a petition is an extra-institutional form of political participation because signing a petition (usually) means an individual is upset with how prevailing institutional practices and rules affect their interests, and the act itself occurs outside of normal institutional mechanisms for dealing with (perceived) political harm. The purpose, therefore, of signing a petition is to challenge current institutional practices, norms and actors.

The predicted probabilities of engaging in neighborhood marches indicate the opposite: African-Americans who have a strong group identity and agree with the tenets of Black Nationalism have a predicted probability of .35 for marching as opposed to the .47 predicted probability for those African-Americans who have a weak group identity and who disagree that African-Americans ought to have political power. While the predicted probabilities seem contrary to what would be expected, the puzzling result can potentially be explained by the ambiguity of the survey question. The question does not specify the reason for engaging in a neighborhood march. If the question had provided a reason for engaging in neighborhood marches (for example, to support community projects or to empower local community residents) the predicted probabilities might have been different since a commitment to black nationalism advocates for community empowerment and a cultivation of local community goals.

Table 2d provides evidence in support of hypothesis 2. Those African-Americans who have a strong racial group identity and agree that African-Americans ought to attend Afro-centric schools have a .53 predicted probability of being a member of an organization who seeks to help African-Americans, as opposed to the .48 predicted

probability for those African-Americans who have a weak racial group identity and who disagree that African-Americans ought to attend Afro-centric schools. For engaging in picketing, the same relationship holds: those African-Americans who have a strong racial group identity and agree with Afro-centric schools have a .12 predicted probability of picketing in contrast to the .04 probability of picketing for those African-Americans with a weak racial group identity and who disagree with Afro-centric schools.

Overall, the predicted probabilities in Tables 1d and 2d provide evidence for hypothesis 1, and some evidence for hypothesis 2. The results confirm what other scholars find in regards to African-American political participation, racial identity and a commitment to black nationalism: African-Americans who strongly identify with their racial group and who agree with a major tenet of Black Nationalism see the need to engage in institutional forms of political participation.[120] The predicted probabilities presented in Tables 1d and especially 2d do provide some evidence that contradicts the prevailing theoretical and empirical research in the study of African-American political participation, and confirms the hypothesis that a commitment to Black Nationalism and strong racial identity can mobilize African-Americans to pursue extra-institutional forms of political participation, although it should be mentioned that the evidence for the second hypothesis is weak.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that a narrative model of political behavior can be theoretically elaborated and empirically tested. It has been argued that racial narratives inform the political behavior of African-Americans generally, and the type of political

[120] Note: Most scholars researching African-American political participation treat racial identity and a commitment to Black Nationalism as separate variables, and do not interact these variables as a way to better explain variation in African-American political participation.

activities African-Americans participate in specifically. This chapter sought to add to the literature on African-American political participation by arguing that the relationship between a commitment to Black Nationalism and political participation is conditioned by African-Americans' strength of racial group identity. Most literature dealing with African-American political participation tends to see a commitment to Black Nationalism and African-Americans' strength of group identity as separate variables. While the interactive variables in all of the models were statistically insignificant, some of the individual terms comprising the interactive variables were statistically significant in some models, suggesting that the theoretical argument which forms the basis of this chapter had merit.

The results of the statistical analysis provide evidence that confirms traditional findings in the study of African-American political participation and evidence contradicting such findings. At a theoretical level, the results of this analysis suggest that the relationship between African-American political participation and a commitment to Black Nationalist ideas is *conditioned by* the strength of African-Americans' racial group identity. The theoretical innovation is to assess the effect a commitment to Black Nationalism has on African-American political participation by emphasizing African-Americans' strength of racial group identity. The complex empirical relationships and patterns that are a result of this conditional relationship provide critical insights into the role that racial narratives and racial identity play in African-American political participation. They also indicate that the theoretical emphasis on a narrative model of political behavior has the potential to theoretically and empirically inform the study of

political behavior more broadly and African-American political behavior more specifically.

Table 1c: Predicting African-American Political Participation: The NBPS of 1993*

	Dependent Variables									
Independent Variables	**Vote**	**VR**	**Give Money**	**Fundraiser**	**CM**	**Contact**	**Petition**	**Member**	**Protest**	**March**
Black Political Power	-0.80* (0.38)	--	--	--	--	--	0.79* (0.33)	--	--	--
Racial Identity	--	--	--	0.83* (0.40)	--	0.87* (0.34)	0.77* (0.30)	--	--	-0.83* (0.34)
Black Political Power* Racial Identity	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Gender (Male)	--	0.59* (0.18)	0.78** (0.17)	0.55** (0.17)	--	--	--	--	0.44* (0.16)	--
Education	--	0.09** (0.03)	0.12*** (0.03)	--	--	0.19*** (0.03)	0.06** (0.02)	0.15** (0.03)	0.09** (0.02)	--
Black Church	0.56** (0.18)	0.77** (0.20)	0.81*** (0.19)	0.84*** (0.18)	1.03** (0.20)	0.50** (0.17)	0.60** (0.16)	0.85** (0.18)	0.67** (0.17)	0.49* (0.19)
Fairness	--	--	--	--	--	--	-0.50* (0.20)	--	-0.53** (0.24)	--
Black Newspaper	--	0.64*** (0.19)	0.74*** (0.18)	0.79*** (0.17)	0.47*** (0.18)	0.71*** (0.16)	0.44** (0.15)	0.60** (0.17)	0.69** (0.17)	0.75** (0.18)
Intercept	0.70	-3.86***	-4.18**	-3.58**	-3.01**	-3.86**	-1.88**	-4.16**	-3.26**	-1.19**
Number of Cases	758	794	792	793	794	794	793	794	794	794

Source: NBPS 1993 *Entries are logit coefficients, standard errors in parentheses.
Note: -- = not statistically significant at the .05 level; VR = Voter Registration, CM = Campaign Material
*P<.05, **P<.01, ***P<.001

Table 2c: Predicting African-American Political Participation: The NBES of 1996*

	Dependent Variables								
Independent Variables	**VR**	**Give Money**	**CA**	**BC**	**Contact**	**Petition**	**Member**	**Protest**	**Picket**
AfroCentric	--	--	--	1.97** (0.72)	--	--	--	--	--
Racial Identity	--	--	--	--	0.63* (0.26)	--	0.82* (0.29)	--	1.09* (0.53)
AfroCentric* Racial Identity	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Gender (Male)	--	0.62* (0.27)	0.50* (0.22)	--	--	--	--	0.52** (0.20)	--
Education	0.11* (0.05)	0.15* (0.07)	--	0.18** (0.06)	0.33*** (0.05)	0.32** (0.05)	0.44** (0.05)	0.19*** (0.05)	0.20** (0.06)
Black Church	--	--	0.56* (0.23)	--	--	--	0.50** (0.17)	0.45* (0.20)	--
Political Trust	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.59* (0.26)
Networks	1.05*** (0.30)	1.52** (0.53)	0.88** (0.34)	--	1.08*** (0.22)	0.88** (0.18)	0.71** (0.22)	0.94** (0.29)	1.32** (0.44)
Intercept	-3.34***	-4.22***	-4.13*	-3.92*	-3.74*	-2.49**	-4.70**	-4.50**	-6.74*
Number of Cases	752	752	753	752	753	750	750	750	750

Source: NBES 1996 * Entries are logit coefficients, standard errors in parentheses.
Note: -- = not statistically significant at the .05 level; VR = Voter Registration, CA = Campaign Activity, BC = Black Candidate
*P<.05, **P<.01, ***P<.001

Conclusion

The preceding chapters have sought to answer a basic question: do racial narratives affect African-American political behavior? The answer to this question, based upon the qualitative and quantitative analyses, is yes. The degree to which such racial narratives affect and explain patterns African-American political behavior depends upon the historical period in which such narratives are proposed to operate. The current study has shown that African-American political behavior is a function of the socially-constructed narratives that have been present throughout American history, but some questions are still left unresolved. The purpose of this conclusion is not to summarize what chapters 1 through 6 have shown, but instead to critically engage with the narrative-model of behavior developed in this study, and to deal with problems and extensions of this model. Several problems still need to be discussed, especially the relationship between narrative and political ideology, the degree to which racial narratives can inform the study of political behavior and American racial politics, whether the analysis presented in this study shows that American society and its institutions are, at a fundamental level, based upon racist assumptions and ideals, and how a narrative model of behavior is needed to understand the historical construction of "race" in American politics. These problems are not insurmountable, and the conclusion ends by suggesting how the narrative-model of political behavior developed here can be used to inform the study of other socio-political cleavages in the United States, and the degree to which an emphasis on narrative can contribute to the study of American Political Development.

Narrative and Ideology: A Synthesis?

An emphasis on narrative indicates that human understandings of the social and political world are informed by the "stories" that are developed by agents. As was discussed in chapter 2, such "stories" by themselves are an incomplete explanation for how agents find meaning in their political activities; narratives also provide agents with a sense of self, or what it means to be or not be a particular person. Such an emphasis on the ontological foundations of human selfhood indicates that narratives provide agents with an identity that is constructed given their attachments to social collectivities and the historical development of such collectivities. The theoretical argument – that narratives provide agents with a sense of identity which agents then use to interpret social and political reality – indicates that human political activity is not determined by pre-political preferences or attributes. Human political activity is dependent upon social and political interaction and how these interactions shape the preferences of such actors.

An emphasis on ideology closely mirrors the above argument, particularly since many scholars see ideology as providing human beings with a worldview or conception of how to interpret social and political life. Those scholarly arguments that depict ideologies as interrelated constellations of ideas that enable human action fit very well with the philosophical assumptions that inform the narrative model. The question becomes how an emphasis on narrative helps to explain human political activity.

It is important to recognize that the current study does not argue that a narrative-model of political behavior ought to replace a conception of ideologically-informed political behavior. Such an assertion ignores the degree to which emphases on narrative and ideology have shared assumptions. But, it is also important to recognize that the current study argues that narratives do have explanatory power, and that ignoring the role

that narratives play in understanding human political behavior is to grant too much weight to the role that ideology plays in understanding human political activity.

Narratives are a way of ascertaining how humans attribute meaning and intelligibility to their behavior. The fact that scholars define narratives as "stories" underscores the fundamental role of narratives in human understanding because in normal, every day political discourse elites as well as citizens have the tendency to explain their actions and behavior by embedding such explanations in "stories". The argument that human knowledge and political behavior is "storied" has the potential to reveal to scholars the depth of human political beliefs and perceptions. "Stories" are complex social phenomena, encompassing such concepts as time, space, plots, and narration. The fact that "stories" are (potentially) seen to be too simplistic of a way to explain human political behavior reveals a misunderstanding about the complexity that underlies the "storied" nature of human behavior.

Beyond the assertion that narratives are complex and inform everyday political discussion, an emphasis on narratives has the potential to explain the relationship between existential meaning and behavior. For example, if an individual votes, they do so potentially because, in a democratic society, that is what citizens are supposed to do; the meanings associated with democratic citizenship helps to explain (at least in a democratic context) why individuals vote. An emphasis on narrative can also explain who individuals vote for, insofar as particular parties and candidates embody values which are important to citizen conceptions of self. The essential point is that narratives provide a crucial linkage between meaning and behavior; they help scholars to understand why an individual acts politically the way that they do, which can then inform

how individuals assess their political environments and subsequently act. Narratives help to answer *why* questions that are ignored by scholars who seem more interested in *how* questions. An emphasis on narrative can link these two types of questions together, providing a better explanation of human political activity.

The premise of the forgoing argument was that emphases on narrative and political ideology are not mutually exclusive; that they ought to inform one another. The way such a synthesis can be generated is by seeing that narratives provide the underlying linkages between ideas that constitute political ideologies. While it is the case that different types of narratives are likely to vary in how they generate the linkages between ideas that constitute political ideologies, it is crucial that scholars who emphasize political ideologies see that political ideologies are constituted by narratives, and the meanings such narratives provide which link together the complex patterns of ideas that are presumed to form political ideologies. The current study has emphasized public or cultural narratives. These types of narratives are broader and more abstract than political ideologies, and they provide the linguistic, social and political terrain upon which ideological contestation occurs. The same theoretical logic applies to these types of narratives: political ideologies are rendered politically meaningful given the public "stories" in which they are embedded. It is important to note that the argument is not saying political ideologies are reducible to narratives. Instead, for constellations of political ideas and arguments to cohere into an ideology they need to have a mechanism that facilitates such coherence and narrative is (potentially) this mechanism.

An emphasis on political ideology seems to require a conception of narrative, but does an emphasis on narrative require a conception of political ideology? On the one

hand, narratives do have some conceptual independence from political ideologies in that narratives need not be defined by a set of interrelated abstract political ideas that functionally cohere. On the other hand, the fact that narratives provide meaning to human behavior implies that for narratives to have political force, they might need to be attached to political ideologies. Insofar as political discourse is informed by ideological thinking, a conception of narrative as conceptually distinct from ideology means that narratives, while providing meaning, might not be as politically powerful.[121] In any event, the point is that narratives and ideologies are not necessarily conceptual competitors for explaining human political behavior, but together better explain such behavior.

The Status of a Narrative-Model of Behavior in Political Behavior and the Racial Narrative Concept in American Racial Politics

The narrative-model of political behavior informs the study of political behavior in two ways. First, it implies that the study of political behavior needs to be concerned with philosophical inquiry, particularly in how questions of ontology and human existence are tied to human behavior. It is one thing to operationalize a concept of identity and relate it to a variety of attitudinal and behavioral dependent variables, but it is a quite another project to show why identity informs political attitudes and behavior. Second, a narrative-model of political behavior emphasizes how individuals and groups are embedded into systems of public values and beliefs. While scholars of political behavior are likely to say that they can show this relationship by controlling for political ideology or more concrete contextual variables such as the geographical region in which

[121] The degree to which political ideologies inform citizen attitudes and opinions has been hotly debated in the political behavior literature. For a review, see Converse 2009.

an individual lives, or the degree to which an individual resides in a rural or urban setting, such variables abstract the individual from the social and cultural milieu that informs their behavior. For political behavior scholars to actually embed individuals in their public contexts, they need to show through historical-qualitative methods (like the ones used in the current study) how individuals exist in particular environments and how those environments inform behavior. The current study does use quantitative methods to explain African-American political behavior, and there is value in using such methods. The problem is that scholars of political behavior tend to ignore historical-qualitative analysis and focus upon ahistorical quantitative analysis. As was mentioned in chapter 1, such a methodological commitment precludes scholars from asking certain questions, and the narrative-model of behavior articulated here has the effect of pushing scholars to use not only different methods, but also to ask different questions. A greater use of both qualitative and quantitative methods has the potential to enrich the field of political behavior, and the narrative-model elaborated in this study is an attempt to show how asking certain questions requires a commitment to methodological pluralism.

The racial narrative concept also has the potential to inform the study of American racial politics. In 2002, writing a review of the racial politics literature in American political science, two important scholars in the field of American racial politics, Michael C. Dawson and Cathy Cohen, sought studies like the one elaborated here (2002: 489; 491):

> "One central theme that extends throughout this essay is the need to understand the process of racialization and racial orderings throughout history and from the perspective of different racial and ethnic groups…More often than not political

> science seems oblivious to the different methods, times, and reasons groups become racialized subjects…To better understand the process of racial classification and its consequences for politics in [the U.S.], political scientists and other scholars must move away from individualist models where respondents and their political views and actions are examined or counted independent of the historical and social context in which their racial and ethnic identities are given meaning….Without any attention to the historical and current context of these…phenomena we may be severely misinterpreting the meaning of the data. Instead, we must acknowledge the processes of racialization and categorization that are embedded in social interactions where groups are assigned places within changing social structures."

That the racial politics literature in American political science has neglected the historical construction of racial groupings indicates that the current study has the potential to answer the call of Dawson and Cohen by inquiring into how African-Americans have been historically marginalized and oppressed and how understanding such processes of marginalization and oppression requires a socio-historical perspective and method. While the current study does utilize the individualist methods that Dawson and Cohen see as problematic, the vast majority of the current study is based upon a historical method that provides insights into systems of racial categorization and stratification.

A commitment to the racial narrative concept provides not only the theoretical assumptions which could lead scholars to inquire into the constructive processes of racialization in the U.S., but it also provides scholars with an example of how historical-

qualitative research can expand and deepen knowledge about racial politics. While other scholars have also answered Dawson and Cohen's call for showing how racial classification and categorization has developed historically (Smith 1997; Holt 2000), the current study's theoretical emphasis on racial narratives has the potential to add another theoretical perspective on how "race" has been constructed over time and the degree to which such constructions have implications for the functioning of American social, political and economic institutions. The current study is also *unique* in that while it can account for the generation of racial classifications over time, it also shows how groups so classified responded to such categorizations through political activity to challenge their marginalization and oppression.

Is America a Racist Society?

On the one hand, there is scholarly consensus that race (and the marginalization of groups based upon racial classifications) has informed American society from its very beginnings. Scholars also agree that racial inequality and injustice pervade American society, despite the rhetorical emphases on a "colorblind" society, or that American society (through the landmark civil rights laws of the 1960s and the enforcement of such laws) is becoming increasingly "post-racial". On the other hand, American society has made monumental strides in trying to deal with racial inequality, and it is no longer the case that a majority of white-Americans believe that African-Americans are biologically inferior or that they ought to be banned from public life and participating in the social, political, economic and cultural activities of American society. The fact that in 2008 Americans elected their first African-American President, Barack Obama, is (potentially)

a testament to the changing nature of American racial politics.[122] The problem is how to deal with these contradictory patterns in American society: is American society racist, or have the changes since the 1960s created a context in which racial inequality and discrimination have receded in importance for the distribution of valued social goods?

The current study maintains that despite changes since the 1960s, American society remains one that is still predominately stratified by race, and that racist assumptions still pervade and inform how American political, social and economic institutions function and are understood.[123] The commitment, on the part of white-Americans, to equal opportunity for all, and a rejection of old-fashioned racism typified by a commitment to seeing African-Americans as biologically inferior, is promising. The problem is that such changes in attitudes are also accompanied by resentment on the part of white-Americans toward using governmental power and public policy to more effectively deal with the legacies of racism and discrimination in American society that limits the choices and life chances of African-Americans (Sears 1988; Kinder and Sears 1981). Finally, the egalitarian-conservatism discussed in chapter 5 still is appealing to white-Americans primarily because it provides a moral justification for inequality and allows white-Americans to believe in such values and institutions as liberty, individualism and private property without having to come to grips with the structural inequalities in the American political economy that make it difficult for African-Americans to enjoy the same privileges and material wealth as whites. The egalitarian-conservatism of the anti-transformative narrative also allows white-Americans to blame

[122] For an argument that does not see Obama's presidency as an indication of changes in American racial politics, see Smith and King 2009.
[123] See the discussion below regarding how American society is also stratified according to gender, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation.

African-American poverty and inequality on poor individual choices, enabling whites to discount the effects that broader social, political, and economic structures have on the ability of African-Americans to make choices.

White-Americans are committed to legal and political equality, but they neglect to see how legal processes and institutions (especially the criminal justice system) are informed by underlying racial assumptions. A commitment to equality before the law is important, but neglecting to understand how groups are *racialized* through legal and political institutions obscures the fact that such institutions, despite their formal commitment to equality for all, treat certain groups differently. The belief that American society ought to be "colorblind" and that its institutions should ignore race in order to overcome racial inequity is a perfect example of the preceding argument. The problem is that ignoring race to overcome racial disparities in access to valued social goods has the effect of obscuring how racial assumptions inform American society, making it difficult for Americans to come to grips with and change the racial assumptions that structure American life.

It is also not entirely clear that a society which does not recognize cultural or group "difference" is socially and politically desirable. As other scholars have suggested, an emphasis on homogeneity, universality and an unified citizenry based upon a "melting pot" model of political membership ignores how *difference* is valuable and allows individuals (and groups) to cultivate their own unique identities and cultural practices, not to mention allowing subordinated groups to contest practices that facilitate their subordination (Young 1990). Emphasizing difference does have its downsides, including conflict and group-based claims to resources, but ignoring such differences can have the

effect of subordinating the unique aspirations of individuals and groups to the will of a (potentially) tyrannical majority.

Maybe the best way to deal with racist assumptions and the patterns of subordination engendered by such assumptions is for American society to recognize how these assumptions inform all aspects of American society, and to be committed to correcting the historical wrongs and injustices that have been (and continue to be) the result of racist practices, beliefs and values. Whether such a commitment means that American society should provide reparations to subordinated groups is debatable, but in the absence of a *public recognition* that America continues to operate upon exclusionary assumptions is to undermine what many perceive America to be: a political community committed to equality of persons before the law, individual liberty and equal opportunity.

Though America is a political community that is still stratified by race and racist assumptions and practices, the current study is not suggesting that racialized patterns of subordination are "natural", "fixed" or ultimately so interwoven into American life that America cannot extricate itself from the shackles of racism. Instead, the current study argues that American society has the ability to create a more just and egalitarian society premised upon an acceptance of difference, and removing the stigmas that for most of American history have been associated with such differences.

The Value of a Narrative Model

While the narrative model of behavior was contrasted and compared with other prevailing theoretical models in a variety of academic literatures in chapter 2, one question still remains: how is the narrative model different from other models, and how

does it give scholars a better understanding of the construction of "race" in American politics throughout American history?

The emphasis on public narratives provides a different approach to understanding human experience and behavior in two ways. First, it focuses upon the ontological significance of public values, norms and practices that inform how individuals conceive of themselves as persons who are attached social collectivities. This study has drawn extensively from American history and the agents involved in the construction of that history to show how conceptions of self are developed, constructed and contested within the contours of historical experience. Other scholars could use the same materials, but in the absence of a conception of history as constituted by public "stories" that have ontological significance for human existence, the meaning of these materials would be neglected.

Secondly, an emphasis on public narratives situates agents within lived human experience, and how this experience shapes and molds their understandings of social and political life. In the absence of an emphasis on public narratives, scholars lose a vital mechanism by which to understand the constructive processes that underlie human experience and give it meaning over time. Humans are constantly involved in the process of narrating social and political life, and this theoretical argument gives scholars insights into human activities, aspirations and values not found in other models.

While a narrative model is different in its approach to understanding history and human behavior, it also provides a better understanding of how "race" has been constructed historically in American politics. First, an emphasis on narratives shows that "race" has been contested, and that such contestation is the mechanism by which agents

reconstruct the public meanings, practices and values attached to racial classifications. While scholars have emphasized how "race" is constructed (and the agents involved in these constructive processes), an emphasis on narrative provides a theoretical argument for understanding *why* agents would engage in processes of contestation over time without having to impute to such agents preferences or interests abstracted from the social contexts in which they operate. By specifying a narrative model of behavior, the current study is able to address (better than other models) how agent preferences and interests are created, and how these preferences and interests drove them to construct "stories" about "race" that provided meaning for their activities in the historical periods analyzed in this study.

Secondly, the narrative model articulated here provides a better understanding of historical change in racial norms, values and practices over time. This might seem to be a strange claim given that the narrative model emphasizes stability, order and coherence. The reason why a narrative model provides a better understanding of historical change in racial norms is that history itself is understood in narrative terms; historical racial norm change occurs as public understandings and values undergo flux, generating a need to articulate an alternative "story" about "race". A narrative model provides a better understanding of *why* new conceptions of "race" emerge, and what these new conceptions mean for human social, political and economic life. In the absence of emphasizing the narrational foundations of historical racial norm change, an understanding of such norms becomes attenuated precisely because racial norms, values and practices are constructed by agents who think and act based upon the public narratives that constitute their conceptions of self.

Problems of the Current Study and Future Research

Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Class and Sexual Orientation

One of the most problematic aspects of the current study is its treatment of "race" without a theoretical explanation of how "race" is intertwined with other socio-political cleavages such as ethnicity, gender, class and sexual orientation. While it is the case that one study can accomplish only a limited number of theoretical and empirical goals, it is a weakness of the current study that it ignores how American society has been stratified by other socio-political cleavages throughout history, and how these cleavages intersect (and interact with) "race".

Future research using the narrative-model of political behavior elaborated here should also specify the "gendered", "ethnic", "class" and "sexual" narratives that have pervaded American society, and show how these narratives are linked to the racial narratives elaborated in this study.[124] One way of accomplishing this task is to breakdown the project into its component parts by specifying these alternative narratives in a similar way presented in the current study, and then to generate a theoretical synthesis by arguing for a broader theoretical concept such as "exclusionary narrative*s*" in American politics. That this broader concept is pluralized is meant to convey that multiple narratives have existed throughout American society, and that they likely intersect and interact in theoretically and empirically complicated ways. While some scholars have already engaged in this type of research by specifying a multiple traditions approach in understanding American political thought and history (Smith 1997), such

[124] It is important to note that work in sociology has shown the intersection of race, ethnicity and sexuality, although it does not use a narrative model like the one developed here. See for example Nagel 2003.

work is only an initial first attempt at what is being argued for here as it largely ignores the cleavage of class, and it completely ignores sexual orientation.

There are three reasons why scholars should emphasize how race, class, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation intersect. First, American history is replete with examples of how subordination is not premised upon a single socially constructed category. Second, knowledge of how subordination, marginalization and oppression are created and given legitimacy in American society can be expanded and deepened. Finally, an emphasis on the intersection of multiple socio-political cleavages provides scholars with a better understanding of how constructive processes underlie social life and give it meaning over time.

Another problem with the current study is the potential conservatism that some might impute to the narrative model developed here. Insofar as a narrative model emphasizes order, stability, coherence and intelligibility, scholars could argue that a narrative model reifies social understandings by making them dependent upon rigid conceptions of these concepts that leave little room for debating the types of order or stability that narratives can provide for human existence and behavior. That the current study sees narratives as socially-constructed is meant to disavow any implication that narratives result in inflexible or "natural" patterns of order. As the current study makes clear, narratives (and the order they create) are contestable. The current study has shown such contestation throughout chapters 3, 4 and 5. The point of emphasizing order and stability is to argue that narratives provide human beings with continuity to their lived existence as social and political beings not that human social and political life is

impervious to the willful activities of agents who are engaged in (re)constructing social and political reality.

Narrative and the Study of American Political Development

Another fruitful extension of the narrative framework proposed in this study concerns its relationship to the field of American Political Development (APD) in political science. APD is a field characterized by an emphasis on how American political institutions have developed over time, the ideas that informed their creation, and the coalitions of actors who were intimately involved in their generation. APD takes an explicitly historical point of view, arguing that to understand how institutions develop, scholars must show historically the events, actors and ideas involved in their creation over time, and how institutions construct "governance" at both the national, regional and local levels of American politics (Orren and Skowronek 2002: 722).

Scholars working in APD have long believed that ideas and material structures (as well as their intersection) matter for explaining the rise of American political institutions, and how those institutions construct politics. What is missing, however, from the APD literature is how the ideational and material aspects of American politics are linked together. Some scholars suggest that actors' interests and preferences provide the link between ideas and material structures. The problem is that such explanations have a difficult time explaining how actors' interests and preferences are generated and change over time. An emphasis on narrative can provide a theoretical mechanism for explaining how actors' interests and preferences inform institutional development. This is so because narratives are social-constructions created through human interaction over time. Thus, they can provide a theoretical account of how actors' preferences and interests are

generated and change. The fact that narratives are also seen as providing actors with a sense of self or an identity further indicates that a focus on narratives in APD research can link ideas and material structures.

In terms of the study of "race" in APD, an emphasis on narrative can also provide a theoretical account of the underlying ideational constructions pertaining to American political institutional development, how such development depends upon constructed racial classifications, and why such classifications were subsequently appropriated by actors inhabiting institutions. Scholars working in the area of "race" and APD repeatedly use the terms narrative and "story", but they fail to understand how these terms represent an implicit attempt on their part to re-construct the meanings attributed to racialized institutional practices over time. The language of APD focuses on racial orders (King and Smith 2008) to explain the role of "race" in American institutional development, and the viability of these orders is premised upon coalitions of actors who have certain interests and preferences. The problem is that scholars neglect to show *why* these coalitions of actors had the interests they did. As King and Smith argue (2008: 81):

> "*Racial* institutional orders are ones in which political actors have adopted (and often adapted) racial concepts, commitments and aims in order to help bind together their coalitions and structure governing institutions that express and serve the interests of their architects. As in any coalition, the members of a racial order support it out of varied motives. Economic aims are central for many, but others seek political power for its own sake, or to quiet social anxieties, or to further ideological goals" (emphasis original).

King and Smith impute (or assume) certain interests or preferences for actors

involved in maintaining particular racial institutional orders, and so doing, they fail to show *why* actors developed the interests or preferences that they did. Accounting for the processes that led actors to develop certain interests or preferences would seem to be an important part of explaining coalition behavior premised upon racial concepts, commitments and aims.

An emphasis on narrative would enable APD scholars who are interested in "race" to show the constructive processes of preference and interest formation, which would then enable them to better explain actor behavior. Imputing or assuming actor preferences to explain behavior neglects to see how actors used and understood historically-constructed meanings of racial group classification and categorization to provide legitimacy to their behavior as members of coalitions. If scholars of APD were to use the narrative concept, it would enable them to generate better explanations of institutional development, and how institutional actors appropriated racialized meanings to pursue their political projects.

Going Forward

The narrative concept and model of behavior articulated in this study has the ability to enrich the study of political behavior and American racial politics. By using the narrative concept and model, scholars can more fruitfully inquire into the intersectionality of socio-political cleavages in American society and deal with the development of American political institutions. An emphasis on narrative has much to contribute to the study of politics in American society, and the hope is that the current study will show scholars in political science (and other disciplines) that emphasizing the "storied" nature

of human behavior can expand and deepen knowledge of the social, political and economic processes that constitute American politics and human experience.

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